

Husseini says little progress made

AMMAN (Petra) — The head of the steering committee of the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks, Faisal Al Hussein, described the first phase of the sixth round of Arab-Israeli talks in Washington as "to have achieved nothing worth mentioning. The only achievement was represented in the Israeli delegation's announcement that a working paper is submitted to the meeting was subject for discussion. Mr. Hussein said shortly before crossing the Jordan River on his way back to Jerusalem after a month-long tour abroad. Mr. Hussein visited Arab and foreign countries in the course of a Palestinian diplomatic drive to rally support for the Palestine cause and for the Middle East peace process. Mr. Hussein said that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's policy did not differ much from that of his predecessor Yitzhak Shamir. The Palestinians will pursue all their endeavours to achieve peace through the negotiations with Israel and through contacts with various world nations," Mr. Hussein added. He said that Jerusalem will remain at the centre of the Palestinian delegation's diplomatic moves as its return to Arab sovereignty constitutes key element of any peaceful settlement to the Palestine problem.

Palestinians ask Israel to reaffirm commitment to 242, page 5



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Britain suspends pound in ERM

LONDON (R) — British Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont said Wednesday night that the pound will be suspended from the exchange rate mechanism (ERM) with immediate effect. Mr. Lamont made his announcement after the Bank of England raised interest rates in two steps from 10 to 12 per cent on Wednesday in an attempt to defend the pound against heavy speculation on foreign exchange markets. Mr. Lamont said that the second, three point, rise in interest rates would not take effect and Britain's new interest rate would be 12 per cent until conditions become calmer. He said he was calling a meeting of the European Community's monetary committee in Brussels to consider how to restore exchange rate stability. (See earlier page 7).

Turkey, Syria review order security

ANKARA (R) — Syrian Interior Minister Mohamed Harba arrived in Ankara Wednesday for talks on security along the joint border which Turkey is trying to close to separatist Kurdish radicals. Turkish Interior Minister Ismet Inönü visited Damascus in April and won a promise that Syria would curb the activities of rebel Kurds in territories under its control. Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas moved out of their main training camp in Lebanon's Bekaa valley in May. Ankara has issued a thinly veiled threat that it might bomb the camps in Lebanon if they were not closed. "We will review the developments on the border since our visit to Damascus," Mr. Inönü told reporters after meeting Mr. Harba at Ankara airport.

Jordan expects peace talks to resume

AMMAN (R) — A senior Jordanian official said Wednesday that the government was ready to resume peace talks in Nigeria with southern rebels and he expected the next round to be held in October. Mohammad Al Amin al-Halabi, speaker of the transitional national assembly, in a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, said the government had conveyed its position to a Nigerian envoy who visited Khartoum recently. A Jordanian embassy spokesman in Khartoum said Khartoum had declared itself ready to hold a new round of talks since a first round journeyed without results in the Jordanian capital Amman in May.

Iranian rebels kill assailant in Baghdad

TEHRAN (AP) — An Iranian opposition group Wednesday said that its contacts shot and killed an assailant when four people tried to enter the organisation's offices in Baghdad. The group said the assailant was a member of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps. The group did not say the nationality of the four, but they were dispatched to the Iranian government to "warn" against "terrorist" acts. The group shot and wounded an Iranian diplomat in Baghdad Wednesday. They said the diplomat had ignored warnings shots as he approached the group's headquarters. The official Iranian news agency said at the time that the diplomat, Javad Pak-Aein, was shot at close range. Last week, Iranian warplanes bombed Minjahedeen bases inside the Iranian border.

French engineer charged with spying

PARIS (R) — A senior engineer of France's atomic energy commission (CEA) has been charged with passing nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union, the office of the investigating magistrate Wednesday. It said Francis Perrville, 35, was charged with "committing treason while using secret defence information to agents of a foreign power." Mr. Perrville, a nuclear engineering engineer in the CEA's heavy applications department, was held in custody pending

Israel, Syria agree on mutual security

Israelis assure Palestinians of 'real' authority after interim period expires

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israel and Syria said Wednesday they believed they could agree on mutual security arrangements as part of a peace settlement and vowed to keep striving for more progress in Middle East negotiations.

But Israel's separate talks with Palestinians, Lebanon and Jordan seemed to be achieving little if any movement, leading some analysts to conclude that chances for a breakthrough before the U.S. presidential elections on Nov. 3 were slim.

A top Israeli official assured Palestinians Wednesday that Israel means to give them real authority to run their lives and does not plan to annex their homes once the self-rule agreement expires.

Israeli officials meanwhile welcomed an unexpected five-hour meeting in Alexandria, Egypt, Wednesday between President Hafez Assad of Syria and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

"This is definitely a positive sign," said an Israeli official of the Assad-Mubarak meeting, which appeared to focus on "Middle East peace talks."

Egypt has been serving as a conduit between the sides.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin was in Washington after completing weekend talks in Cairo with top Egyptian officials. He told a small gathering here Wednesday that Egypt promised its help in suspending the traditional anti-Israel resolutions proposed by the Arabs at the annual U.N. General Assembly.

Paper urges Baghdad to control prices, currency

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's most outspoken newspaper, published by President Saddam Hussein's son, criticised the government Wednesday for failing to control soaring food prices and the skyrocketing black-market dollar exchange rate.

The rate Tuesday night, the newspaper Babel said, shot up to 47 Iraqi dinars to the U.S. dollar from 42 dinars on Tuesday morning.

The official rate is \$3 to the dinar, and the unofficial rate ranged from 18 to 25 over the past few weeks before a sudden jump.

Because of the two-year U.N.-imposed economic embargo, Iraqis are suffering acute shortages of food and medicine. The prices of all goods and services have increased dramatically.

Babel, owned by the president's eldest son Uday, published a front-page editorial signed "Al Sagar." (The falcon). Same

Progress made on joint text

WASHINGTON (R) — Syria and Israel said Wednesday they had agreed on some elements of what they hope will become a joint statement of principles in Middle East peace talks.

After a three-hour negotiating session at the State Department, both the chief Israeli and Syrian delegates gave by far their upbeat assessment of the talks so far. Syrian negotiator Mouwafak Al Alai said the talks had been serious and businesslike, concentrating on a Syrian document presented earlier in the negotiations.

"We are continuing tomorrow and we hope that the same seriousness and the same businesslike atmosphere will continue so that at the end of this round maybe we can come out with something that can be acceptable to both sides," he said.

"We have discussed some of the important elements in the document and we were able to agree, at least in a general way, about some of these elements," said Mr. Alai.

Israeli negotiator Itamar Rabinovich said: "We discussed texts, we compared texts, we agreed on some formulations, we continued to disagree on some but disagree in a positive spirit."

Both men stressed that they had not yet dealt with the key Syrian demand for a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights.

See page 4 for the full text of an Israeli proposal on Palestinian interim self-government arrangements. Their proposal was handed over by the Israeli delegation to the Palestinian delegation on Sept. 14.

The assembly convened Monday. Mr. Beilin also softened Israel's longstanding objection to a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) role in Middle East peace talks, noting that his government was seeking to abolish a law banning contacts with the organisation.

"I do not suggest talking directly with the PLO in Tunis," he said, but indicated that such contacts were being conducted with "PLO-affiliated" Palestinians on the negotiating team with Israel.

The chief Israeli and Syrian negotiators reported they were

making progress towards some security arrangement on their border.

Responding to reporters' questions on their way into Wednesday's session at the U.S.-sponsored peace talks, both the chief Israeli and Syrian negotiators pinpointed the security issue as one on which the sides seemed in accord.

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King visits Khoei Foundation

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein, now recuperating in London after surgery in the United States, Tuesday night visited the Khoei Foundation in London, where he met with Abdul Majid Al Khoei, son of the late Shiite Imam, Grand Ayatollah Abul Qasem Al Khoei, and members of the foundation, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The King offered his condolences on the death of the Muslim scholar who passed away late last month. The King described Ayatollah Khoei as one of the leading Islamic and Arab scholars, Petra said.

The King thanked the foundation members and Mr. Khoei for their good wishes to him for a speedy recovery following his surgery.

Rabin sees peace in 1 year

BERLIN (Agencies) — Visiting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Wednesday there could be peace in the Middle East in the next six to 12 months.

He told a Berlin meeting of the Socialist International that the best contribution European nations could make to the peace process was not to sign boycott clauses in trade agreements with Arab states.

Israel is negotiating in Washington with Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and a Palestinian delegation in the sixth round of peace talks since the sides first met around a table at last year's historic Madrid peace conference.

"Don't expect miracles," Mr. Rabin said, but added he hoped the talks could be successfully ended "six to 12 months from now."

Mr. Rabin, who has been criticised in Israel for making his three-day visit to Germany, called on other Arab states to follow Egypt's example and make peace with the Jewish state.

He said that Israel was prepared to talk with Syria about the Golan Heights which Israel has occupied since 1967.

"Territorial issues are negotiable," he said, adding that any understanding with Syria should not be dependent on peace agreements with other Arab states.

Mr. Rabin also called on German firms to invest in Israel to help finance jobs for about 400,000 Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Arab ministers discuss economic reform

TUNIS (R) — Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid urged Arab economy and finance ministers on Wednesday to liberalise their economies. His call was backed by Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Karoui, whose country is implementing a reform programme drawn up with the help of the World Bank. "Economic reforms are an insistent need for several of our countries while some of them have done positive and practical steps in that way," Dr. Abdul Meguid told the ministers at a meeting to discuss liberal economic reforms in their countries. "Economic reforms would contribute to reduce differences between the Arab countries' economies," Dr. Abdul Meguid said. The two-day conference was called by the Arab League's Economic and Social Council. A preparatory document stressed the need to stabilise national currencies and liberalise the private sector to encourage investments. "The obstacles to the activities of the private sector in some Arab countries are not implemented," the document said. Mr. Karoui told the ministers there was no alternative to liberalising their economies.

UAE values relation with Iran, but wants Gulf islands back

DUBAI (Agencies) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) wants to maintain relations with Iran but will use "all possible means" to win back three strategic Gulf islands taken by Tehran, a senior official said Wednesday.

"We are always keen to retain our relations with Iran," Saif Said Saeed said in an interview with the London-based daily Al Hayat published simultaneously in the UAE newspaper Al Khaleej.

But Mr. Saeed, director of Gulf affairs at the UAE Foreign Ministry, said it was up to Iran to take the next step.

"Iran was the one that pushed the situation to what it is now. Hence it is up to Iran to review its position," he said.

The UAE would strive "by all possible means for the return of its complete sovereignty over the island of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tumb islands," he added.

Iran's actions were not befitting "a Muslim country who considers a neighbour, which is bound to us by firm historical relations."

Tehran has virtually annexed

Abu Musa, a tiny island controlling strategic Gulf shipping lanes near the Straits of Hormuz, since March after exercising joint control with the UAE since 1971.

Iran sent troops onto all three islands under the late Shah in 1971, on the eve of the formation of the UAE as Britain withdrew its forces from the area. It took control of the Tumbs but shared Abu Musa under a formal agreement.

The UAE has responded to Tehran's recent actions on Abu Musa by reasserting its claims to all three islands.

The Arab League Monday condemned Iran's "aggression" in the islands as a threat to regional peace.

Iran responded by blaming the crisis on the United States and Britain, saying they had fanned it to justify their military presence in the Gulf.

The UAE and Iran have important trade links, and the UAE has in the past maintained good relations with its giant neighbour across the Gulf despite traditional Arab-Iranian rivalry heightened by the Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to

1988. Asked if trade interests with Iran would put pressure on the UAE to resolve the issue, Mr. Saeed said it was Iran which brought about current tensions and it was up to Tehran to review its position.

Mr. Saeed said the UAE had documents backing its claim.

He said Iran, which claims documents substantiating its own position, should present them to international forums and not resort to occupation by force.

A government newspaper said the UAE was confident of world support in its feud with Iran.

"Bearing in mind the experience of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the international community will not stand still against any other occupying country and will reject the expansionism," Abu Dhabi's Al Itihad said.

The front-page editorial came as Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, accused the United States and other Western powers of attempting to create discord to "justify their illegitimate presence in the Persian Gulf region."

Compromise worked out to ensure Yugoslavia's suspension from U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Diplomats said Wednesday that they have agreed on the framework of a deal under which Moscow will not veto a resolution suspending Serbia-dominated Yugoslavia's U.N. membership.

European diplomats, requesting anonymity, said that under the proposed compromise Yugoslavia would be suspended from voting in the entire U.N. system, the first time that measure has ever been taken against a member-state.

But it could reapply to take the seat held by the old Yugoslav federation once peace is restored to the region and Belgrade has met all international demands that it cooperate with its neighbours, the diplomats said.

"The formula saves face for everybody," said one European diplomat. Others confirmed the outline of the deal.

Meetings continued Wednesday to work out details of the arrangement.

Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Panic said Wednesday that Yugoslavia, represented by Serbia and Montenegro, will apply

anew for membership in the United Nations and other international bodies, a news agency reported.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said Russia will support the Belgrade leadership's move, the ITAR-TASS news service said.

The two officials spoke at Moscow's Sheremetyev airport where Mr. Panic made a stop upon returning from a visit to China, ITAR-TASS said.

Western and Islamic nations have sought to suspend Yugoslavia from the United Nations for fomenting civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Russia was the only nation to express open opposition Tuesday to the move to suspend Yugoslavia — now consisting of only Serbia and Montenegro — at the opening of the 47th General Assembly.

But Russia's ambassador, Yuri Vorontsov, had hinted to reporters Tuesday that a compromise might be possible.

"We are looking at the proper way of keeping Serbia, Montenegro ... here in the family of nations ... In our eyes it's not unseating, it's just finding the proper procedure to keep them here."

The European diplomats said they believe Russia will abstain on the suspension resolution when it comes before the Security Council, where Moscow holds veto power with the four other permanent members.

Russian diplomats said they preferred to postpone the move until elections scheduled for November in Serbia, when they hoped moderates loyal to Premier Panic would defeat hardline supporters of nationalist President Slobodan Milosevic.

China's leaders told Mr. Panic in Beijing Tuesday that they would not use their council veto to block a move to expel Yugoslavia, Mr. Panic told reporters.

With Russia and China abstaining, the resolution — now in draft form — would pass the 15-nation council easily, possibly later this week.

U.S. marines dispatched to Somalia

MOGADISHU (AP) — The last five soldiers of an initial contingent of 60 U.N. troops arrived in Mogadishu Wednesday to protect relief food for the starving.

More than 100,000 Somalis already have died from the combined effects of drought and warfare. The United Nations says another two million will die if sufficient quantities of food are not delivered soon.

Dozens of people die daily in the Somalia capital, which has been reduced to anarchy by civil war. A week ago, a Somali relief worker was fatally shot at the airport, and fighters often loot aid shipments.

The five Pakistani soldiers stepped off one of four U.S. air force C-130 cargo planes that also delivered tonnes of supplies and equipment for the eventual force of 500 men.

The battalion's chief task will be to secure Mogadishu's port, which has been shut down frequently by marauding looters, gunplay and disputes between rival clans.

The United Nations hopes to move up to 2,000 tonnes of food a day through the port when it is fully operational, far exceeding the amount being delivered by a multinational airlift.

The rest of the Pakistani infantry battalion is expected to arrive by Sept. 25, ferried to Mogadishu by U.S. planes.

Brigadier General Imtiaz Shaheo, the Pakistani commander of the U.N. force, said none of the U.N. troops would be deployed until the full battalion has arrived.

The United States also sent four warships carrying 2,400 marines sailing towards Somalia from the Gulf to support an American airlift of the U.N. troops.

Marine Brigadier General Frank Libutti, 47, who is coordinating a U.S. airlift of food to Somalia from the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa, flew to Mogadishu for a one-day visit Wednesday to help coordinate the troop transport operation.

Also Wednesday, an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) official said he had met with Somalia's main warlord and was optimistic he would accept an additional 3,000 U.N. troops to guard relief supplies in the chaotic country (see page 2).

And U.N. Children's Fund

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OAU envoy says warlords will talk peace, page 2

OAU envoy says Somali warlords will talk peace

NAIROBI (R) — A special pan-African envoy said Wednesday Somalia's two main warlords had shown willingness to attend international talks to restore order to the famine-hit country.

Djibo Ka, special envoy of Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Chairman and Senegal President Abdou Diouf, told reporters after a visit to Somalia he found the country "more than annihilated, totally ruined."

Some two million Somalis are facing starvation largely due to the effects of civil war and the country's collapse into anarchy in which international relief supplies are subject to large-scale looting by armed gangs.

Mr. Ka's delegation was the highest ranking pan-African team to visit Somalia since January 1991 when warlords Mohammed Farah Aided and self-declared President Ali Mahdi Mohammed helped end dictator Mohammed Siad Barre and then turned on each other in clan-based bloodletting.

"I have talked to both Ali Mahdi and Aided and they have shown a willingness to sit down and end the wrangling in their country, so that a semblance of peace can be created again," said Mr. Ka, who is Senegal's foreign affairs minister.

Both warlords say they are ready to attend national reconciliation talks but have laid down stiff conditions for their participation.

General Aided wants Mr. Ali Mahdi to renounce his self-appointed title of president and Mr. Ali Mahdi insists that his rival give up territory he seized in the war between their armies.

Fending off criticism that the OAU and its members stood by and watched Somalia disintegrate, Mr. Ka said: "African countries may have the will to act but have neither the financial resources required nor a standing

military force that could be called upon for intervention purposes."

He said security remained Somalia's biggest problem and food distribution could not be streamlined until security was established in the main ports, airports and urban centres.

Mr. Ka said African states firmly supported the United Nations plan to send up to 3,500 armed troops to guard food and relief workers in Somalia and urged Somalia to support the U.N. effort if they wanted their state to get back on the way to recovery.

Some 500 Pakistani troops approved by the U.N. will be deployed in strategic places and will also guard aid workers in the capital, Mogadishu. Sixty have already arrived.

A further 3,000 troops approved by the Security Council mainly from Belgium and Canada — could be deployed if the warlords and clan leaders agree.

U.S. marines and commandos are on their way to the Somali coast to help the Pakistani troops.

Mr. Ka said some African states had also offered to send troops as peacekeepers "and will avail the soldiers as soon as the Security Council so requests."

Mr. Ka said Mr. Diouf would present new Somalia peace proposals to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali after his talks with Gen. Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi. "All Somalis must completely cooperate with the U.N. in a programme of ending starvation in that country and beginning to create public amenities and some sort of infrastructure again," Mr. Ka said.

"If they do not, we cannot estimate the abject misery that will be added to the every day torture people in that country have to go through, where living is a privilege some citizens would rather just give up."

U.S. groups criticise human rights abuses

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. allies in the Middle East are guilty of atrocious human rights abuses, said Washington-based human rights groups said Tuesday.

Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, while by no means alone in human rights abuse, escape the fierce condemnation meted out to powers like Iran or Iraq, they said.

"This lack of candour is regrettable and does not go unnoticed in other Middle Eastern states where the U.S. may wish to have a positive impact on the human rights situation," said Neil Hicks of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

Mr. Hicks testified before a joint hearing of the House of Representatives foreign affairs subcommittees on Europe and the Middle East and on human rights and international organisations.

His findings were echoed by Amnesty International USA and Middle East Watch, which both urged the United States to play a more even-handed role in promoting human rights.

"The U.S. takes a selective approach to democracy," said Andrew Whitley, executive director of Middle East Watch.

"Its failure to speak out where abuses are being perpetrated by its close allies, notably Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, is shameful," he said.

Mr. Whitley said Saudi Arabia had one of the worst human rights records in the region, citing reports of torture, beatings and killings in Saudi prisons.

Kuwait also came under criticism for expelling entire communities, although Amnesty and Middle East Watch differed over whether conditions had improved recently.

"Since the liberation of

Kuwait, however, U.S. senior officials have shied away from publicly criticising the serious human rights violations," said Mr. Whitley.

He also criticised U.S. policy towards Egypt and Israel, and Amnesty International added Turkey, a key U.S. military ally in the Gulf war, to the list.

"Methods of torture and ill-treatment include flogging (beating on the soles of the feet), electric shocks, boxing with cold water under pressure, and being blindfolded and stripped naked," said Executive Director Jack Healey.

He cited the case of Medha Carabaz, a nurse taken into police custody who said she was given electric shocks to her nipples and was raped with an electric trolley.

"There is a human rights crisis of massive dimensions in most countries in the Middle East," said Healey.

Among the groups' other findings: — Widespread abuses in the Israeli-occupied territories, including torture, extrajudicial killings and unfair trials. "A grave violation of human rights which appears to have gathered intensity in recent months is the apparently premeditated killing of wanted Palestinians by undercover units of the Israeli army," said the lawyers committee.

— In Iraq, "with its back to the wall, the Saddam Hussein regime has lashed out in recent months," Middle East Watch said. Two of the groups are investigating reports Baghdad has in recent weeks used napalm against rebels in the south.

— Iran is "one of the biggest disappointments of the past six months," Middle East Watch said. Amnesty has documented the execution of more than 5,000 people in the last three years.

Iraq private enterprise paralysed by executions

AMMAN (R) — Iraq's execution of dozens of merchants in a crackdown on profiteering appears to have backfired, paralysing the thriving private enterprise system that kept sanctions-hit Baghdad stocked with goods.

The 42 executions in late July eliminated many older established traders who had kept Iraq's markets supplied and its post-Gulf war economy afloat largely on imports from Jordan.

Instead of bringing down prices, the summary killings have frightened off traders, further drying up the already reduced flow of imports from Jordan and sending food prices soaring even higher on the open markets.

Millions of Iraqis depend on the open markets to supplement official monthly food rations and the government has been forced to distribute rations in advance to meet the shortages.

"It was a terrible mistake," an Iraqi with ties to the government said of the executions.

Baghdad has tried to mend fences by sending envoys to Amman, including President Saddam Hussein's brother Barzan, to persuade Jordanian and Iraqi merchants in the Jordanian capital to re-enter the market.

But the traders, squeezed by Amman's tighter adherence to U.N. sanctions against Baghdad and by a devalued Iraqi dinar, were further put off by an Iraqi ban on all but essential imports and the imposition of a 10 per cent profit ceiling on trade.

The Baghdad envoys were largely unsuccessful in wooing back the traders and the government is now trying to fill the void itself, sending buyers to Jordan with suitcases full of dollars, merchants and diplomats said.

Several Iraqis said the executions sparked public outbursts against the government and in at least one case several people were wounded.

In Baghdad's Al Azamia district, security forces fired on mourners protesting against the execution of a merchant who had distributed food to poor families in his neighbourhood for years, sources said.

Iraqi traders in Jordan said the killings had toppled the pillars of what had been close links between established private businessmen and the government.

In its place, they said, the government was pushing to extend its control over the economy, banning luxury imports to save foreign currency and trying to convert military industries to manufacture consumer goods banned by U.N. sanctions.

Some traders said Baghdad has sent officials from its Ministry of Industrialisation ministry to Jordan with shopping lists of items such as spare parts needed for factories to pump out consumer goods.

"This will help weaken Iraq by making it more of a closed, state-controlled economy," said an Amman business leader who estimated that shipments from Jordan had fallen by more than half in recent months.

In a state of war you can't control anything," he said. "When you have boycotts or sanctions the grey market grows."

U.S. church official assails sanctions against Iraq, questions policy logic

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior official of an American group of churches Wednesday criticised the Bush administration's policy towards Iraq and called for an immediate end to the sanctions imposed on that country following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Dale Bishop, Middle East director of the New York-based National Council of Churches (NCC), also pledged to continue to church-sponsored activities towards raising awareness among Americans of the realities in the Middle East.

"On our own, we cannot change the policy of governments," Dr. Bishop conceded, "but public opinion can and we are trying to influence public opinion."

According to Dr. Bishop, an outstanding example of how public opinion can change policy decisions was how Washington could not go ahead with reported plans to invade Nicaragua at the height of tensions between the Bush administration and the government of Sandinista leader Manuel Ortega.

The NCC, Dr. Bishop said, played a key role in shaping American public opinion against an invasion of Nicaragua.

Dr. Bishop was speaking to

the Jordan Times on the fringes of a seminar by the Middle East Council of Churches entitled "Children of War: Where To," which opened here Tuesday.

The church official, who has a long record of involvement in Middle Eastern relief efforts, questioned U.S. President George Bush's repeated statements that the Iraqi people were not the "enemy" in the Gulf war.

"It is the Iraqi people and not the political leaders who are suffering under the sanctions," Dr. Bishop pointed out. "If, as the (U.S.) president says, the Iraqi people are not the enemy, then why is it that it is the people who are suffering?"

"The war of bombings and air raids has ended, but the silent war — the sanctions which are seen as a substitute for a military battle — is continuing."

"Starving a population is equally violent as bombing them into oblivion," he added.

Reports from Iraq speak of mounting suffering of the people under the continuing sanctions. Food prices have skyrocketed beyond the means of average families, and an acute shortage of medicine and hospital supplies has seriously affected the national health situation.

According to figures released by the Iraqi govern-

ment, tens of hundreds of children have died as a direct result of malnutrition and shortage of medicines after the sanctions were imposed two years ago.

Food and medicine are exempt from the sanctions, but Iraq says it has no money to buy since the international embargo bans any Iraqi export.

Dr. Bishop said the NCC, which has 32 affiliated churches with a membership of 42 million people, has been trying to influence public opinion in the U.S. through public discussions and video programmes on the Middle East.

"There is indeed a gradual change, but it is a long, slow, hard and frustrating process," he said.

In a broader context, Dr. Bishop said unless there were fundamental changes in the thinking of governments it was very difficult to protect the human rights of children in situations of conflict.

"How can governments claim that they care for children when they produce and distribute weapons?" he asked.

"If they really care about children as they say then they should stop producing weapons," he added. "And this means a fundamental change in the 'new world order' and a new kind of international diplomacy."

Gulf turmoil boosts U.S. arms sales, but cooperation is elusive

By Neil MacFarquhar The Associated Press

MANAMA, Bahrain — Selling U.S. arms to Arab governments appears to be getting easier in light of two years of conflict with Iraq, newly energised Arab-Israeli peace talks and economic pressure in the United States.

But whether the sales of high-tech weaponry will speed attempts to build a viable regional military deterrent, less reliant on Western firepower, remains an open question.

Gulf states keep most military procurement secret, but arms manufacturers estimate that the region's military plans represent a \$60 billion market.

The biggest customers are Saudi Arabia, which wants to double its 70,000-man military and has spent around \$10 billion on U.S. arms in the last two years, and Kuwait, which needs to replace everything from its main battle tanks to computers lost in the 1990 Iraqi invasion.

"America's strategic interests are now with the Arabs in the Gulf, where there are more problems than there are in Israel at the moment. The threat to Saudi Arabia is much greater," said Paul Beaver, editor of Jane's Intelligence Weekly, which tracks global arms sales.

President George Bush's announcement last week that he was planning to sell 72 sophisticated F-15 Eagle fighters to Saudi Arabia in a \$5 billion package illustrates how things have changed.

It would once have been tantamount to political suicide for a U.S. president to announce such a sale only 50 days ahead of the November elections.

In the past, Israel's lobby waged protracted congressional battles to block such sales. The lobby's success often sent a worried Riyadh shopping elsewhere.

In 1986, Saudi Arabia bought British Tornado fighters after Congress blocked F-15 sales.

That is changing with Middle East peace talks rolling in

Washington, a more pragmatic government installed in Israel, Iraq still "belligerent" and Iran rearming on a large scale.

Also, with the end of the cold war and major military cutbacks, the U.S. defence industry needs overseas sales more than ever to survive.

McDonnell Douglas, a major producer of F-15 fighters, was to close early next year, at a cost of up to 40,000 jobs, for the industry's beleaguered aerospace industry, if no new foreign orders were forthcoming.

"There's no doubt that the U.S. Congress is far more willing to support the administration when they want to sell to America's major friends in the region," said Mr. Beaver.

Israel has protested the proposed F-15 sale and no-one expects the Israeli lobby to be quiescent during the 30-day deadline for congressional approval.

But U.S. interests in protecting the kings and sheikhs who sell America 10 per cent of its oil, and an even greater share to its allies, are likely to outweigh Israel's objections.

Experts note that the winning argument is likely to be whether Congress wants thousands of Americans sent to the Gulf every time there is a crisis.

"The Saudi air force is under-protected in terms of its neighbours," said John R. Thomson, a former U.S. embassy commercial counselor in Saudi Arabia.

The United States, wary of sparking domestic upheaval in Arab states or inflaming volatile neighbours like Iran, says it wants to lower its profile by building up regional forces.

"Our effort over here, first and foremost, is to build a collective security structure," Admiral Raynor A.E. Taylor, commander of the 24 ships in the Gulf which make up the power of the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, said in a recent interview.

Regional leaders like Kuwaiti Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Al Sabah say powerful friends and high-tech weapons are the best insurance.

U.S. says Syria and Lebanon take first step for troop pullout

WASHINGTON (Agency) — The United States, apparently attempting to put the best face on a difficult situation, on Tuesday said Lebanon and Syria had taken a first step towards implementing an agreement, demanding the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

Lebanese President Hrawi and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad have taken the first step by meeting to discuss the issue, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters.

"We anticipate further consultations between Lebanon and Syria in preparation for a decision on the pull back with Syrian troops," Mr. Boucher stressed that "in our view that decision should be taken by both governments this month, with redeployment occurring shortly thereafter and as soon as possible."

But he stopped short of criticising either side even though official sources have reported that the two leaders decided to delay talks on withdrawing Syrian troops from Beirut until after a new Lebanese government is formed next month.

Asked if the United States was satisfied with the Syrian-Lebanese talks, Mr. Boucher said: "We've stressed... that they need to take further steps, that they need to make the decisions now, and that they need to do the redeployment soon after... satisfied comes at that point."

"But we've urged them to continue this course that they've now started upon, having a meeting to make these decisions, and we anticipate that they will have further meetings."

The United States on Friday told Syria and Lebanon they must decide immediately on a partial Syrian troop withdrawal to eastern Lebanon and carry it through as soon as possible.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

29 Iraqi refugees presumed drowned

ATHENS (R) — Twenty-nine Iraqi refugees, whose boat capsized in Greek waters two days ago, are missing and presumed dead, Greek officials said. "The search is going on but we have found nothing. We believe they drowned," a Merchant Marine Ministry spokesman said. The boat, carrying the refugees from Turkey, overturned in high seas off the Aegean Island of Chios, near the Turkish coast. Seven women and five children were among the missing. Government officials said Athens would protest to Ankara asking that it take all necessary measures to halt the flow of illegal refugees from Turkey to Greece. Sixty-five Iraqis from Turkey reached the island of Kos early on Tuesday and asked for political asylum. Some 900 refugees have fled to Greek islands from Turkey this year. Merchant Marine Minister Aristoteles Pavlidis said last week coastguard units would be transferred from the mainland to the islands in an effort to stop vessels carrying refugees from entering Greek waters.

Militant leader arrested in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian police arrested Wednesday a Muslim militant leader said to have planned recent attacks on foreign tourists, security sources said. Badri Makhlof, described by the sources as leader of militants in the southern province of Qena, was captured at dawn in Sohag, about 500 kilometres south of Cairo. The sources said Mr. Makhlof was suspected of planning at least two petrol bomb attacks on tourist buses in Luxor, site of some of Egypt's best-known Pharaonic monuments, and the killing of a plainclothes policeman in Qena six months ago. Four French tourists were slightly injured in a bus attack in July. Police arrested dozens of militants and seized weapons in Qena following the attacks. At least 50 people have been killed in militant related violence in Egypt since March, mostly in Assiut province north of Sohag.

Mums to give birth in plastic pools

TEL AVIV (AP) — Six British women who hoped to give birth among dolphins in the Red Sea will instead deliver their babies in water-filled pools at a hospital, a hospital official said Wednesday. The mothers' wish to deliver in a glass-walled pool with dolphins watching was inspired by British obstetrician Gwori Motia, who said she wanted to see if the dolphins could make contact with the fetuses through ultrasonic waves. But Israel's health ministry mixed the idea, saying births were forbidden at unlicensed locations. The expectant mothers agreed to a compromise, giving birth in small plastic pools in the delivery room of Eilat's Yosefat hospital, said Dr. Eilon Lachman, the hospital's director of gynaecology. Meanwhile, the women continue to swim every day in a pool with dolphins, Dr. Lachman told Israel's army radio. "They seem very relaxed and confident about the water delivery," Dr. Lachman said. One of them has already given birth in a pool of water "after a previous pregnancy, she added. The women plan to have "non-touch" natural childbirths without pain killers or medicine, but hospital officials will be standing by to assist if problems occur. The mothers brought the plastic pools with them from Britain and will enter the pools in the last moments before birth, Dr. Lachman said. The first birth is expected within the week, she said.

Kuwaiti minister warns of 'fifth column'

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Hamoud Al Jaber Sabah has been quoted as saying that a "fifth column" may try to disrupt Oct. 5 elections. "Caution is a must because the fifth column of the enemy is active, especially in time of elections when citizens go to ballot boxes to give a vote of confidence to those who will represent them in the national assembly," Sheikh Ahmad told the newspaper Al Sayassah. "Such a right was denied by the enemy to its citizens," he added. Kuwaiti officials have blamed a series of unexplained bomb attacks this year on a fifth column, with a possible Iraqi connection. Sheikh Ahmad said that a little over 81,000 voters had registered to vote and predicted that around 60,000 would actually cast ballots in the national assembly poll. A total of 303 candidates have registered to contest 50 seats in the all-male election.

Netherlands grants Yemen \$4.5 million

SANAA (R) — The Netherlands has granted Yemen 7.5 million guilders (\$4.5 million) to help finance an agricultural training programme, Sanaa Radio said. The programme aims at encouraging technical training and studies to further agricultural development. The Netherlands has been extending 50 million guilders (\$30 million) annual aid to Yemen for the past 10 years.

Algeria fines novelist for libel

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian novelist Rachid Boudjedra was fined the equivalent of \$50 for libelling former President Houari Boumedienne and his wife Anissa, the official news agency APS reported Tuesday. He was convicted of smearing the honour of the Boumediennes by describing their closest aides as sexual maniacs and alcoholics in a book published in April in Paris. Mr. Boudjedra, author of several novels, this year published a stinging attack on the outlawed Algerian Muslim fundamentalist movement Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) entitled "FIS De La Haine" (The FIS of hatred). The book has not gone on sale in Algeria.

Algerian civilians warned of attacks

ALGIERS (R) — The para-military gendarmerie, which says it is in a state of war against armed activists, warned Tuesday that Algerian civilians were the target of a terrorist campaign. "The gendarmerie fears a resurgence of aggressions against citizens," according to the gendarmerie command quoted by the official news agency APS. A communist militant was shot dead in the eastern town of Constantine last week, the first attack on a prominent civilian by Muslim fundamentalists whose attacks were aimed so far mainly at members of the security forces. Over 150 members of the security forces, police or gendarmerie, have been slain since February when Muslim fundamentalists went underground after cancellation of a parliamentary election. The gendarmerie said there was a hard core of between 19 and 24 "terrorists" supported by 200 Muslim activists. It added that four of the hard core were particularly dangerous.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:30 Envoy Special
19:30 Operation Mozart
19:40 News in French
19:45 Varieties
19:50 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Empty Nest
21:00 W.I.O.U.
22:00 News in English
22:30 Movie of the week: "The Razor Edge"

PRAYER TIMES

04:55 Fajr
06:16 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:51 Dhuhr
16:41 Maghrib
20:03 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish
Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 627285.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624900.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terrestrial Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 623383, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771231.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 627061, 628336.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 611255.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 623804 and 654932.
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675991.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be moderate to fresh and winds will be north westerly dusty in the deserts. In Amman winds will be southerly moderate and some calm.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 16 / 29
Aqaba 25 / 36
Dera'a 14 / 33
Jordan Valley 20 / 35

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 29, Aqaba 32. Humidity readings: Amman 51 per cent, Aqaba 21 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abdul Qader Al Lakh 696048
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 891824
Dr. Basim Kaddourani 648024
Dr. Mohammed Al Sawar 723056
Fina pharmacy 649485
Perdows pharmacy 778336
Al Azema pharmacy 637055
Nawroth pharmacy 623672
Al Saba pharmacy 626730
Yacoub pharmacy 644985
Farouk Al Adham pharmacy 629610
Al Samah pharmacy 796443
Palestine pharmacy 625216
Samsat pharmacy 637660
Rana pharmacy 638072
Hansa pharmacy 691677
Great Arab pharmacy 624051

IBRD:

Dr. Mohammad Al Hela ()
Tubesh pharmacy ()
ZABQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawat ()
Dr. Khalifah pharmacy 963417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Response 630241

Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rasme Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 912228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 638321
Hotel Complaints 628800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage

Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 1231
Overseas Calls 010220
Central Amman Telephone

Reginal 623101
Abdel Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 771111
Water Authority 680100
Greek Catholic Hospital 815615
Electric Power

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husni Medical Centre 812813/22
Khald Maternity, J. Amn. 642818
Abdullah Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malles, J. Amman 631400
Palestine Hospital 664171/4
Shumaila Hospital 649131
University Hospital 848845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Jalal, Al-Musharraf 771013
Al-Bahar, J. Amman 771112/6
Army, Marha 891611/15
Queen Abla Hospital 622403/50
Abad Hospital 674135
ZABQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)883323
Zarga National Hospital (09)880260
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)886732
Al-Ras Modern Hospital (09)999990
IBRD:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275525
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)522005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

Hindawi says comprehensive plan will improve education

GENEVA (Petra) — Jordan has adopted the concept of a comprehensive educational development as part of ensuring the success of the country's socio-economic programmes, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thounan Al Hindawi said Wednesday.

Comprehensive educational plans now being carried out in Jordan were adopted in accordance with the 1987 national educational conference which was organized with the purpose of attaining qualitative improvement in the educational system of the Kingdom, said the minister in an address at the 43rd International Education Conference organized by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The comprehensive education plan takes into consideration the pre-school education; arrangements have been taken to work out a national strategy for child development in the 1990s, said the minister. He said that the plan aims at generalising the pre-school education process in the country by the end of the century.

The plan entails an overhaul of the textbooks, curricula and higher teachers training coupled with the construction of modern buildings to serve as schools provided with all technical and educational facilities, the minister said.

Recent reports, meanwhile, said the ministry has failed to implement a plan for building 430 schools in the country, as specified by the plan.

Two hundred schools were supposed to be built between 1989 and 1992 in the first phase of



Thounan Al Hindawi

the three-stage plan, but officials said the ministry will not meet its objective. They gave no reason for the delay.

The ministry's plan entails building 100 more schools between 1993 and 1995 and 130 more between 1996 and 1998. The ministry has acquired funds as grants from the United States and loans from the World Bank for the implementation of parts of the project, but the rest is supposed to be financed by the Treasury in allocations within the annual fiscal budgets, according to the officials.

Mr. Abdul Razzaq Maani, director of the ministry's Projects and School Buildings Department said the new schools will follow a certain style which saves up to 15 per cent of the cost of the previous school designs through reducing the overall area of the schools.

At present, Mr. Maani added, 1370 classrooms included in the

first phase of the plan are under construction and they are expected to be completed by the end of 1992.

He said that the ministry of education is driving to reduce the rate of illiteracy in the Kingdom from 20 per cent by the end of 1990, to less than 10 per cent by the year 2000.

Mr. Hindawi said the ministry was striving to deal with the school drop-outs and stem illiteracy which impedes socio-economic development.

Furthermore, he said, the ministry has introduced special education courses for the disabled and handicapped in order to enable them to adapt to the requirements of life.

With reference to the educational situation in the occupied Arab territories, Mr. Hindawi said that the Israeli military authorities have been persistently obstructing the education of Palestinian children through closure of schools, and detention and torture of teachers.

He said the children of Iraq are also deprived of their right to a decent living with the continued imposition of sanctions on their country. The minister said that poverty and starvation are depriving the Iraqi children of their basic human rights despite the fact that their country has fully complied with all U.N. Security Council resolutions on the Gulf War.

One hundred and thirty six countries are represented at the meeting by ministers responsible for education. In the six-day conference, the delegates will discuss the role of education and culture in development.

Minister reaffirms commitment to public health

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Agriculture Fayez Khasawneh said Wednesday, that the government places public health safety at the top of the list of its priorities.

Public interest and the safety of Jordanian citizens are placed above other considerations, including agricultural exports, said the minister at a press conference.

Referring to a government decision to destroy agricultural produce in farmlands irrigated with water from Khirbet Al Samra treatment plant, the minister said the decision was misinterpreted because it coincided with the banning of Jordanian crops from entering Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia has banned entry of Jordanian agricultural produce into its territory for the past 20 days, claiming that recent shipments were contaminated.

"We have denied that our crops were contaminated," and tests conducted on samples of the exported fruits and vegetables which were returned from Saudi borders proved that they were not contaminated by any pollutants, he said.

Jordanian crops are grown in numerous irrigated areas, namely in Mafraq, southern Amman, Azraq, and Zayta in addition to the farmlands within the Zarqa River Basin, said the minister.

He said that more than 98 per cent of the Kingdom's fruits and vegetables come from the desert lands within the Amman, Zarqa and Mafraq governorates.

Therefore, describing Jordan's agricultural produce as contaminated is a deliberate attempt to distort the reputation of the country's agricultural sector, the minister stressed.



Fayez Khasawneh

He said that the total area of irrigated land in all regions is estimated at 200,000 dunams of which 2000 dunams only be within the Zarqa river basin and not all of these are polluted areas.

Referring to a council of ministers decision to ban plantation of vegetables and fruits near the Khirbet Al Samra waste water treatment plant, Dr. Khasawneh said that it was a substitute to a 1989 defence order aimed at normalising and regulating the use of treated waste water.

As martial law is non-existent now, there was a need for issuing the government order about the types of crops that can be grown in that area, he explained.

According to the previous laws, the treated water from the Khirbet Al Samra plant should only be used for irrigating lands on which animal feed and forest trees grow, the minister added.

The minister said the ministry would offer compensation only to farmers who have not violated the laws and regulations and whose crops are to be destroyed as a result of the recent order.

Regent receives Belgian delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent has said that Jordan was pursuing democracy and political pluralism despite crucial circumstances facing the country and the region as a whole.

In a meeting with a visiting Belgian parliamentary delegation at the Royal Court Wednesday, the Regent reiterated his call for holding a security and cooperation conference in the Middle East, similar to the conference on security and cooperation in Europe.

Head of the delegation, Gilbert Bossuyt, said his country supports regional cooperation in security matters in the Middle East.

The Regent and the Belgian delegation also discussed the Arab-Israeli peace talks and Jordan's role in it. The meeting was attended by Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki.

In a statement to Jordan Television, Mr. Bossuyt, who is deputy speaker of the Belgian Parliament, expressed the hope for further promoting Jordanian-



Belgian relations, which he said were "good."

He said his visit to the region, which includes Egypt, Syria and Israel in addition to Jordan, aims at studying the Middle East Peace process, especially that Belgium will hold the presidency of the European Community next June.

He said this country was seeking a more active role in the

peace process and that the current visit to the region aims to help achieve that goal.

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker also held talks with the Belgian parliamentary delegation on the Middle East peace process and Europe's possible role in it.

At the meeting, which was attended by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Atif Betoush and Parliament member Hosni Shiyah, bilateral cooperation in economic fields and means of boosting trade exchanges between Belgium and Jordan were reviewed.

The Belgian delegation was also received by Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber who reviewed with it developments in the Middle East peace process and reaffirmed Jordan's serious desire to attain a just and durable peace.

Mr. Bossuyt and his delegation, who arrived in Amman Tuesday evening, are scheduled to meet with the Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament to discuss parliamentary affairs before leaving Jordan Friday.

Former officials to challenge retirement decision in court

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Twenty-five former Ministry of Education employees are vowing to take judicial action against the government for what they call the "inappropriate" manner by which it ended their services as of Tuesday.

"The decision was unjust, arbitrary and we will take unanimous action to protest it in a court of law," said one of the employees who was retired Monday.

Another retired official told the Jordan Times that "we would not have protested the decision had it followed clear and well-defined retirement procedures, applicable to everyone."

The employees learned of the decision to retire them in the newspaper and that "strongly astounded us," one of them said. "Can a person, who served for over 20 years, and who was occupying a leading post as a director or advisor, hear suddenly of his retirement in the newspaper without being notified earlier?" he asked.

"The act was humiliating and unjust," considering that all the employees had occupied leading posts as directors or advisors at the ministry," said another former official who asked not to be named.

The Ministry of Education, however, rejects the allegations, saying that the decision was taken in accordance with the Civil Service Law and all the affected employees were informed of the decision via facsimile message.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Khaled Al Ghazzawi said the decision was carefully studied by the ministry and approved by the Council of Ministers, which is entrusted to protect government employees from arbitrary actions.

"Such decisions are not taken at random," Mr. Ghazzawi said. The Civil Service Law stipulates that government employees can be put on retirement after 20 years of service for men and 15 years for women. The retirement has to be approved by the Council of Ministers, the only authority that can issue the decision.

The employees, however, question the basis upon which the retirement list was drawn. They claim the ministry still needed their services, pointing out that four of them hold doctorate and master's degrees which they obtained on ministry's scholarships.

The retired employees could still have benefited the ministry, said Thounan Obaidat, who recently returned from Paris where he served as Jordan's representative at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Mr.

Obaidat, who said he had conducted four comprehensive researches on education in Jordan, was among the 25 retired employees.

Mr. Ghazzawi said the decision was normal and "gives an opportunity to the new generation to replace the old one." But the retired employees said it "cannot be normal" for the ministry to end the services of two advisors whose assignment abroad was extended last month for one year and to retire another one who is currently representing the country in a conference on education in Geneva.

They say there are hundreds of employees at the ministry whose services exceed 20 years and demand to know the procedure followed in choosing the people to be retired.

Mr. Ghazzawi responded saying that the ministry employs about 60,000 persons and cannot retire or keep all of them.

"This is not a phenomenon. It is followed everywhere and in all institutions. What we have to realise is that even if we occupy leading posts, we have to give the chance to others," he said.

This explanation is unacceptable, according to the former employees who said they are unanimous on the need to fight the act as an "indignity" that no senior government employee should have to face.

Jordanian workers voice support for Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian workers participated in a festival held in Baghdad last week to voice Arab workers solidarity with the Iraqi people, according to Mr. Ibrahim Al Ajarmeh, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Land Transport and Mechanical Workers.

He said that the rally was held to express Arab workers support for Iraq and its people in the face of attempts designed to partition the country and maintain sanctions on it.

Mr. Ajarmeh, who was speaking Wednesday upon his return to Amman from Baghdad, said that workers from Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania attended the event and expressed their full solidarity with Iraq "against the conspiracies."

The workers demanded that sanctions on Iraq and Libya be lifted and called on Arab masses to abort all attempts aimed at partitioning Iraq, said Mr. Ajarmeh.

"All the delegations participating in the week-long event have voiced the Arab workers movement's support for the Iraqi workers particularly in their ongoing efforts towards the reconstruction of the country," said Mr. Ajarmeh.

He said that the Arab workers voiced their full support for the Iraqi workers endeavours to open a third river which will flow in the coming few days in order to provide water for the irrigation of six million dunams of arid land.

Mr. Ajarmeh voiced Jordanian workers' deep appreciation of Iraqi workers efforts to rebuild the destroyed factories and other vital installations devastated by the air raids during the war.

Yemeni delegation, Health Ministry hold talks

AMMAN (Petra) — A visiting Yemeni health delegation Wednesday held talks with Ministry of Health Secretary General Dr. Adnan Abbas on cooperation between Jordan and Yemen in health-related affairs.

The Yemeni delegation, which arrived here earlier Wednesday, is led by Dr. Abdul Karim Al Jumeid who said in a statement that his talks in the country will cover the prospects of employing Jordanian medical cadres to Yemen.

Discussions at the meeting covered a follow-up to the implementation of bilateral health agreements between the two countries facilitating the treatment of Yemeni citizens in the Kingdom.

Irsheid urges UNRWA to move headquarters to the Middle East

AMMAN (J.T.) — The head of the Jordanian delegation to the annual meeting of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Advisory Council returned to Amman from Vienna Wednesday where he discussed Jordanian-UNRWA cooperation in providing services to Palestinian refugees with the agency's Commissioner General Hani Turkmen.

Adel Irsheid, who is also head of the Palestinian Affairs Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that his discussions with Mr. Turkmen covered means of raising the standard of services offered to the Palestinian refugees living in Jordan.

In a speech delivered at the council's meeting, Mr. Irsheid outlined Jordan's position on the agency's operations and the general conditions of the refugees.

In his address, Mr. Irsheid spoke about Israel's continued arbitrary measures and practices in the occupied Arab lands which, he said, led to the deterioration of living conditions for the Palestinians in general and residents of refugee camps in particular.

He also referred to the heavy burdens shouldered by Jordan in the course of providing for the Palestinian refugees, saying that Jordan was helping the agency to carry out its services in the Kingdom.

Mr. Irsheid urged Mr. Turkmen to intensify his contacts with members of the Advisory Commission and countries hosting Palestinian refugees with the aim of involving them in drawing up the



Adel Irsheid

main outlines of the agency's annual fiscal budget, Petra said. He also demanded that the Vienna-based agency headquarters be moved to its main fields of operation in the Middle East.

Such a move, he said, would drastically reduce the agency's expenses.

Mr. Irsheid voiced the Jordanian government's call for improving the agency's educational and vocational training services for Palestinian refugees in Jordan and for raising the standard of health services through expanding and boosting health centres and clinics. He urged UNRWA to resume distributing food supplies for the needy refugees.

Mr. Irsheid said Jordan was ready to maintain full cooperation with UNRWA in improving services offered to the refugees.

During the meetings, Mr. Turkmen read out a report to be submitted to the U.N. General Assembly.

In the report, Mr. Turkmen appeals for some \$20 million in

special funding for the agency's programmes. "The alarming fact is that the agency is still short of funds to carry out essential operations which could improve the quality of life for Palestine refugees," Mr. Turkmen said.

He said only \$6.7 million had been received from donors in response to an appeal for \$25 million he made in November 1991 and reiterated in April of 1992.

Mr. Turkmen told participants at the meetings that UNRWA still requires \$5 million for urgently needed school and health centre construction and for environmental health projects.

The agency also requires over \$8 million for critically needed housing repair and reconstruction for refugees living in Lebanon and the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Noting the depressed job market in the region, he also issued a new request for \$2 million to enable the agency to expand its income-generation programme which provides low-interest business loans to Palestinians.

During the meeting, the UNRWA Advisory Commission, composed of 10 governments, stressed that it was essential "that the agency's projects and programmes... be given the necessary means" to improve "the daily life of refugees" and called on "all member states and present and potential donor countries to increase their contributions or to start contributing to the agency."

The Advisory Commission also discussed the Commissioner-General's draft annual report for 1991/92, which will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly later this year.

Conference to explore means of preserving cultural heritage

AMMAN (J.T.) — A conference and workshop on cultural resources management (CRM) in Jordan will open at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman Saturday under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

The three-day event is organized by the American Centre of Oriental Research (ACOR) in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities. The programme is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The cultural heritage of Jordan has been increasingly threatened by public works which are typical of a rapidly-developing society," an official statement has said.

Such development projects are needed and cannot be stopped but there is danger that Jordan's rich past will increasingly fall victim to the march of progress, which would have a negative impact on the country's economy in which tourism plays an important role, the statement added.

It stressed that Jordan's "rich cultural heritage requires protection from needless destruction."

Until a few years ago, this protection often consisted of salvage operations at sites already partially destroyed by construction, said the statement.

"Salvage," the statement stressed, "is not enough and coordination between Jordanian and international development agencies and the Department of Antiquities is a must, especially when land-use decisions are being made," it said.

Among the speakers at the seminar are Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Yassir Hikmat, Director General of the Department of Antiquities Safwan Tell and ACOR Director Pierre Bikai.

Under the CRM programme, the statement continued, this objective is being pursued through the creation of information sources and through the creation of mechanisms for sharing that information.

Mr. Qasbi said a contract has been signed with a local Jordanian company to construct 300 chalets in Sultan Qaboos Housing Estate. These chalets will be sold to citizens and run by the company to maintain the tourism feature of the city.

He added that another Jordanian investment company will soon start the construction of a hotel at the Southern Beaches, with a capacity of 382 beds.

Another hotel with 250 rooms will also be constructed by the beginning of the new year.

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Another hotel with 250 rooms will also be constructed by the beginning of the new year.

1000 teachers benefit from housing fund

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education Employees Housing Fund, which was established in 1981, has so far granted 1000 beneficiaries some JD 10 million to help them finance the construction of their houses, according to the Fund's Director Hamdan Al Dabaghi.

Mr. Dabaghi said in a statement Wednesday that the fund came into being upon directives of His Majesty King Hussein issued on Teachers Day in 1975. The King has ordered that arrangements be made to ensure homes for all teachers in Jordan.

The fund grants interest free long-term loans to teachers wishing to set up their own homes or to enlarge existing ones or to pay back loans on housing they had acquired from the Housing Corporation or the Jordanian commercial banks. Mr. Dabaghi said.

He said the ministry, in cooperation with the Housing Corporation, builds home for teachers who pay only 50 per cent of the instalments on the house while the ministry pays the rest. Such homes were built in Tafila, Karak, Maan, Balqa, Irbid, Madaba and Aqaba governorates and districts, he said.

Mr. Dabaghi said the ministry has made available housing units for teachers in the Jordan Valley in cooperation with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Jordan Valley Authority.

He said in the 1992 fiscal budget, the Ministry of Education allocated JD 186,000 for the construction of housing units in remote regions within the Mafraq, Tafila, Maan and other governorates.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Children of university employees receive partial exemption of fees

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Education Council Wednesday decided to exempt children of employees at Jordan's state universities from paying half of the fees for the credit hours in their various courses. The decision takes effect as of the new academic year which starts Sept. 19.

Cypriot delegation to visit the country

AMMAN (Petra) — Cypriot trade delegation is due here on Sept. 29 on a several-day visit to Jordan. The delegation members will hold talks with officials from the private and public sectors on means of boosting the volume of trade between Jordan and Cyprus and will display samples of Cypriot products to the public.

1 person killed, 32 injured in car accidents

AMMAN (Petra) — A statistical bulletin issued by the Public Security Department (PSD) Wednesday said that one person was killed and 32 others injured in 72 road accidents that occurred in the previous 24 hours. The statement said that the Amman governorate had the lion's share of these accidents, accounting for 56 of them.

Kawar visits Jordan Valley

AMMAN (Petra) — Water and Irrigation Minister Samir Kawar Wednesday inspected the work of the Operations and Maintenance Departments at the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) and the water pumping stations located between Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley and Zay. The minister also visited the Tomato Paste Factory in the Jordan Valley and stressed the need for installing special equipment for the treatment of water at the plant.

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Jordan Times

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Opportunities to be seized

AFTER A ten-day break, the Middle East peace talks started again in Washington on 14 September with all parties aware that if a great opportunity is not to be lost there must now be substantial rather than merely psychological progress towards peace.

It has been said that the Arabs never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity of improving their situation; and there are certainly occasions in the long and painful history of the Palestine question when the Arabs can be seen — with hindsight — to have decided unwisely. But from the outset the Arabs have been confronted over Palestine with choices, not between what was good and what was bad, but between what was bad and what was worse — and few of us could say with confidence that in their shoes the West would have decided differently.

The situation of the Israelis has always been quite different. They have had to decide, not whether to give up this or that part of what was theirs, but whether to claim all or only a part of what, in the eyes of all but themselves, was not theirs at all. And it may fairly be said that in aiming consistently for more than was reasonable they have thrown away — deliberately — at least as many opportunities as the Arabs.

For example, the Jarring Mission set on foot by the U.N. Security Council in its Resolution 242 was effectively sabotaged by the Israelis in 1969. Later in the same year the U.S. secretary of state, William Rogers, set out in detail the requirements for the kind of peace settlement envisaged in Resolution 242. Through their friends in Washington the Israelis saw to it that the Rogers plan was quietly buried. Again when President Sadat of Egypt made his journey to Jerusalem, bringing with him his own vision of what was to be a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Menachem Begin successfully whittled down the vision until all that was left of it was a separate peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. And most recently, when James Baker, with endless persistence, coaxed the two sides into the negotiations which opened in Madrid late last year, Israel's Prime Minister Sh. . . as he recently made clear, set out to prolong the talks indefinitely while his government completed the colonisation of the rest of Palestine.

The new Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, has been at pains to show that he is eager to make up for lost time; and the Palestinians are more than ready to join him. On both sides the tone of the exchange between Arabs and Israelis has improved and there are tentative expressions of optimism. But the Palestinians are anxious about the extent to which Rabin's declarations indicate a real change in Israeli intentions. Words have so far not been matched by actions and even the well advertised "conciliatory measures" taken by the Israeli government — releasing a few hundred out of the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners, opening a few roads that had been closed, cancelling deportation orders which should never have been issued — appear negligible to the Palestinians when contrasted with Israel's refusal to discuss the future of Jerusalem or to consider any concession on the all-important question of self-determination in the occupied territories.

In the absence of progress on the main issues, the Palestinians are beginning to ask whether there is really any difference between Rabin and Shamir, both as regards the end in view and the means by which to achieve it. Fortunately, although the two men are equally merciless in their attitude towards the Palestinians, there is a fundamental difference in their ideas about how to handle the Palestine problem. Yitzhak Shamir's political upbringing, what the French call his *formation*, was that of a terrorist, and he has never discarded his conviction that anything, however unjust or unrealistic, can be achieved through violence. Yitzhak Rabin on the other hand, while no stranger to violence, was trained as a soldier and rose to be chief of staff and minister of defence — besides serving as his country's ambassador in . . .

Both as a soldier and a diplomat, Rabin has learned to recognise the limits of the possible and to see, as a perceptive columnist wrote in *Ha'aretz* last month, that after 25 years of the occupation:

...it is becoming clear to anyone with eyes in his head it is absurd to hold on to the territories and their Palestinian residents. The idea has no basis in reality — *Middle East International*, London.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE ARAB League is dead and there is no chance of breathing new life in this organisation, said Al Ra'i daily Wednesday. It said that total submission to the will of the United States, France and Britain with regard to national questions and condoning the Western countries' atrocities against Iraq can only indicate that the Arab League is dead and of no use any more. The paper referred to the recent Arab League meeting in Cairo which, it said, refrained from issuing any statement condemning the continued onslaught on Iraq and was devoid of any expression of solidarity with the people of Iraq who are suffering from aggression. These, it said, clear expressions of the dying organisation. The Arab League Council, represented by the Arab foreign ministers, has issued a statement in support of the residents of Jerusalem but failed to express solidarity with the Palestinians under Israeli rule and those who have been evicted from Kuwait, the paper said. It said the council's shameful stand declares the demise of the Arab League, which has condoned Western powers' criminal actions against Iraq and failed to condemn Iran's open threats against the Arab Nation for fear of angering the Tehran regime or the colonial powers of London, Paris, and Washington. The paper said that by so doing the Arab League has manifested the Arab countries' absolute humiliation and submission to the aggressors and opened the way for a final act of aggression that would bring about the permanent enslavement of the Arab nation.

A three-dimensional view of our technology

By Saad Barakati

Is necessity the mother of invention? Or is it really boredom? The inventor of the milking machine was either too bored to milk cows or too bored watching the milk maids doing it. Either way he or she must have been an inspired thinker. But for technology to be transferred to industry, marketing is needed.

A good marketing technique is to take an invention, most probably the product of a bored mind, and turn it into a viable commodity. That is, either to make people think they need it or to make them need it, by obliterating other options. If that fails, the industrialist can make a war machine out of the invention then start a war. History is replete with such examples.

To make people think they need the new product, it must be presented to the potential consumer as a time-saver, a money-maker, a valuable item to own or a combination of all of the above. That is where manufacture and marketing technologies

come in. The outcome is that everyone will be kept busy: manufacturers complying with orders, salesmen selling the product, engineers servicing it, banks counting the return on investment and consumers working harder to make more money to purchase it.

Consider the following picture: A man drives back home in a fully automatic car, presses a button to open his garage door, another button to take the elevator to his apartment, then he gets into his gym to exercise his body to exhaustion on a multitude of torture machines. He has used technology to have an easy life and used technology to rough it up. It would have been easier and cleaner to cycle or jog to work. To me this is acceptable when done in a technological environment, such as that of industrial ovens, although many voices from these same societies stand in opposition to abuse of technology. And still acceptable because the resources are rotating in the same place. But this use or abuse is not acceptable in a purely

consumer society; it is sad to see it paid for with exhaustible resources, be they animal, vegetal and most of all mineral.

In some cases, when none of these exist in sufficient quantities, the importing nation will sink in debt, the members of this society will grow dependant, wasteful and gradually develop industrial nations' diseases such as stress, obesity, pollution. This, in turn, will force them to import more technology to diagnose these newly imported ailments. It makes the thinkers of the importing nation wonder why they have to pay \$15,000 for \$50 worth of basic material. They will begin to think of establishing technological infrastructure.

It is indeed a very tickling and tantalising word this infrastructure. What is it? The provocative title is used to import laboratory apparatus, set up imitative industries and, at best, import technical training apparatus.

It happened in some developing nations. Instead of selling crude oil for miserly prices to buy the refined byproduct at several

orders of magnitude higher costs, they set up factories for petrochemicals which are built, managed and unpowered by foreigners to produce, at a higher cost, what they used to import. Is this infrastructure? Or is it setting up scientific societies and similar prestigiously named bodies to do the thinking for the nation? Neither.

It is a mere papier maché structure, a hollow shell made of paper and glue, painted to give an almost believable appearance that dissolves with the first rainfall. Real infrastructures are those which regenerate new industries from the ashes, just as in Germany and Japan which gained the standing of industrial powers after near total destruction of building and machines. The Germans used aircraft spare parts, cylinders, pistons, wheels, cockpits, etc. to build three-wheel cars at a very low cost. They made use of whatever was available. This was achieved because the infrastructure was not gravely harmed. The infrastructure is made up of the brains, the underlying organisation

and the well-established technological system.

Our technological and scientific bodies are too busy imitating others' technology and reinventing the wheel over and over.

Has anyone heard of our enlightened scientists researching on inexpensive methods for polymerising used engine oil to make roof tiles for example? Or designing an electrically assisted bicycle to negotiate Amman's hilly terrain? Or fundamentally solve the many problems we have with our buildings?

I have neither heard nor seen evidence of the minutest trace of activity in that direction.

Blindly following other models of technology from all directions and sources has led us nowhere. It is sad when we see a T.V. programme imported from Germany or U.K. telling us how the use of deep furrows in ploughing destroys the soil. A mule-driven wooden plow, they argue, is healthier for the soil in the long run. It comes a bit late, after we had forgotten how to make a wooden plow, the old artisans are all

dead and we are too spoilt by technology to get our hands dirty.

It is also depressing to see how consumers in the industrial nations are opting for "organically grown foods" while we are still importing chemical fertilisers and pesticides. They are getting rid of the "nasty" industry and relocating it into our world; their children are cutting down on chocolate while we stuff ours with junk food. They are using herbal medicine, aromatherapy and massage while we are gobbling up Valium and antibiotics for the slightest symptom. The sad part of it is we are not following what they do, but we are doing what they stopped doing and admitted the futility of.

With this in mind, do we have a hope? Yes, we do have hope. But we will have to wait a while in order to know which direction to take.

The writer is an electrical engineer. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

'Interim arrangements should create the proper atmosphere for negotiations on the permanent status'

Following is the text of a letter addressed by chief Israeli delegate to the Middle East talks Elyakim Rubinstein to his Palestinian counterpart, Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi, on Sept. 13, 1992, one day before the resumption of the talks, Monday. The letter is accompanied by the Israeli proposal for Palestinian interim self-government arrangements:

I am writing to you on the eve of the opening of the second half of this round of negotiations. It is our profound desire and hope that this round will end with mutually satisfactory positive results, which will enable all of us to feel that we have embarked on the road toward our goal of agreement on Interim Self-Government Arrangements.

We would like to be able to work together with you on the basic concept of the Interim Self-Government Arrangements. Our challenge, in our view, is to find the right balance between introducing very significant change in the life of the Palestinians in the territories; and not prejudging the nature of the permanent status negotiations which are to begin in the third year of the ISGA period or closing options for the future, and while not affecting Israeli basic interests. We believe, and would hope to be able to convince you, that our concept is structured to achieve this balance. We would like to try to view together with you our proposals, which have been elaborated on in our responses to your questions, in this light. It may assist in promoting the discussion and the negotiations.

In our meeting of Sept. 3, 1992, I tried to explain, with certain detail, our concept. And indeed, we felt that before dealing with the modalities for general elections, we should be able to agree on the nature of the elected body, which will be elected by the Palestinians of the territories from among the Palestinians of the territories, in accordance with the agreement.

The proposed Palestinian Administrative Council (PAC), while obviously not having the powers of a state, such as primary legislation, will have significant powers and responsibilities, which will apply to the majority of the walks of life of the Palestinians in the territories, and will include relevant infrastructure aspects within the territories presently under Israeli military administration. It will have the power of promulgating regulations (by legislation); an independent court system will function too. Thus, the change will be very significant; however, the overall territorial-geographical issue is to be discussed in the permanent status negotiations, and this also should be made clear. If this is mutually agreed, we may be able to move from all encompassing ideas and discussions to the detailed negotiations.

You posed to us the question of whether the elected officials of the Palestinian Administrative Council will, per our proposals, be in fact "officials of the Israeli military government." They will not; they will be accountable to their electorate, and will have the full ability to function in the framework of the agreement. The powers reserved by Israel or matters which request coordination and cooperation are designed to serve necessary purposes, hopefully without adversely affecting the functioning of the PAC.

The PAC will have the power to make decisions in the various aspects of its agreed responsibilities. Our enumeration of the proposed spheres was not meant to "draw the ideas in a sea of

words." It was aimed to assure that this proposal carried with it a very real promise and potential. We stated also that the coin has another side, which points to Israel's interests such as security and Israelis in the territories and other aspects of peaceful coexistence.

We attach an informal document in which we tried to elaborate on some of the above. We will readily respond to any further questions or clarifications.

You shared with us a draft framework agreement. We tried to study it with openness and good will. Unfortunately, the basic point which prevents it from becoming an acceptable basis for negotiations is the overall all-encompassing underlying territorial concept, which cannot be part of the Interim Arrangements, because it only leaves one option for the permanent status. We could further explain our above position as necessary.

We also read your memorandum of Sept. 3, 1992 and studied it carefully. It also contains some of the above difficulties, concerning the difference between ISGA and permanent status. We believe, however, that if we try to move together towards the actual negotiations, a lot can be achieved, in a wide spectrum of issues, including some of those which are mentioned in your memorandum, although not in the full context and terminology used by you.

You referred to the notion of experts. We believe that experts are welcome and can be of assistance in specialised negotiations. However, modalities concerning them should be mutually agreed, as all modalities in the Madrid formulas and our own procedural agreement. In our view, this issue should not complicate the work ahead of us or overload the already loaded and difficult issues on our table, by additional aspects which may be of a sensitive political nature. It should be further discussed, meanwhile being addressed on an ad-hoc basis as necessary along lines formerly suggested by us, without prejudice and while trying to identify experts who do not pose problems beyond their expertise.

Finally, we look forward to your comments on your agenda ideas as well as on committees. You referred to the need to respond to the desires and hopes of our constituencies. It is our belief that this is achievable.

Again, we are hopeful that the negotiations in the coming two weeks will be conducted in the best atmosphere, and mutually satisfactory results will be attained.

Sincerely,
E. Rubinstein

INFORMAL CONCEPT OF THE INTERIM SELF-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS BUILDING BLOCKS FOR AGREEMENT

A. Negotiating framework

1. Goal of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians of the territories and terms of reference:

Agreed Interim Self-Government Arrangements for a period of five years. Beginning the third year, negotiations on the permanent status will take place. On the basis of Resolution 242 and 338. The above is based on the Madrid invitation and is suggested in its framework.

A sequence of three basic elements is suggested:

(1) Agreement

Our current negotiations should culminate in an agreement containing all relevant elements, and issues necessary to achieve the goal of Interim Self-Government Arrangements.

The agreement should be concluded and signed by the negotiating partners, namely, the Israeli and Jordanian-Palestinian delegations. This will grant the agreement its international standing and will assure its acceptability to all concerned.

The agreement we envisage may include a number of documents: the main agreement on the relevant principles, and annexes to deal with special matters (various spheres, elections modalities etc.).

(2) Interim Arrangements

The basic idea of the interim arrangements, for a limited

period of time, is that they should create the proper atmosphere for the negotiations on the permanent status, it must not prestage or prejudice the permanent status itself.

There are different concepts of the permanent status, and they should be raised and negotiated in the proper time and forum, meanwhile, the concept of the permanent status must remain undefined and the interim arrangements should leave all options open for the agreement on the permanent status.

The interim arrangements will create a significant change in the reality of life of the Palestinians of the territories. The nature and contents of this change is the essence of the present negotiations.

(3) Permanent status negotiations

It is agreed that the permanent

status negotiations and the negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, will take place on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338.

The permanent status negotiations should include Jordan; the Madrid invitation relates to the Joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and to the Palestinians who are part of it, and 242 deals with states, as is clear from its language.

The above formulation was achieved on the basic understanding that Resolution 242 has different interpretations.

Thus, the deliberations of all aspects and matters of these resolutions, pertaining to the permanent status negotiations, will not be addressed in the context of the present interim arrangements' negotiations.

2. Preparatory and supportive measures for building confidence

Israeli its has shown it's good will by implementing some confidence building measures in the territories including releasing of prisoners, easing restrictive and preventive measures and revoking expulsion orders.

It was agreed to create a joint working group on human rights parallel to the negotiations. This working group could discuss other mutual confidence building measures.

This working group should be established together with other working groups which will deal with issues directly connected to the Interim Self-Government Arrangement (see below).

Israel has agreed to a review of the legal systems in the territories, in the framework of a joint working group on legal matters which will deal

(Continued on page 5)

LETTERS

What pan-Arabism?

To the Editor:

I am prompted to part with some words of wisdom to Sana Atiyeh after reading her letter to the editor (Jordan Times, Sept. 16) lamenting the state of inter-Arab relations.

First of all, the Gulf crisis shattered the notion of pan-Arabism and Arab unity. Now it is a matter of each Arab country tending for itself, with little thought for the joint Arab institutions and events that had been painstakingly brought into being over the past decades (not that these institutions and events were anything spectacular in the past either). In the bargain, some play to the times of the oil rich countries and carry favour and secure financial gains while some others do not, will not or cannot.

If the series of developments in inter-Arab relations since the Gulf crisis are any indication, then the only criterion in determining inter-Arab relations is the financial status of each individual country. And if that indeed is the basis for social, economic, political and cultural interaction among Arab states then why do we need anything called pan-Arabism?

It is possible some exercises will be held in the near future ostensibly aimed at addressing the gaping holes in inter-Arab relations, but these would be superficial since the oil countries owe their first allegiance to themselves, regardless of what is happening in the backyard.

Expectations based on the "inevitability" of Arab states turning in earnest and full sincerity to each other in due course of time are a pipedream if the present regimes in some Arab countries continue to reign. The simple fact is that sound and logical relationships have to be based on interaction among the people and not simply at leadership level. Since few of the contemporary leaderships in the Arab World can claim to represent their people, the question of soundness and logic does not enter the picture. For example, Syria's refusal to allow Iraq to participate in the Arab games was not a rebuff to the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein in as much as it was a slap in the face of the 17 million Iraqis. So what popular interaction are we talking about here?

Imad Khairallah,
Amman.

No aid to Israel!

Following is the text of a letter sent Wednesday by the Amman office of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on the occasion of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's visit to Bonn:

As a counterforce to the Israeli and Zionist lobby in the United States, we express our grave concern over and opposition to granting Israel any loan guarantees or other assistance by Germany or the European Community. No aid should be given to Israel before it complies with all U.N. resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

Israel must evacuate its existing colonies in the occupied Arab territories and cease all racist, inhumane and illegal practices against the Arab people living under occupation.

Israel's settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza is a clear violation of U.N. resolutions, the Geneva Convention and the declared position of the EC, and should therefore come to an immediate end.

The EC's realistic position on the Palestinian issue made Israel exploit the powerful political influence it exercises on Washington and Moscow and insist on excluding European nations from the Middle East peace talks, overriding Arab demands for an effective EC involvement.

Under the pressure of the Israeli Zionist lobby in the U.S. and Russia, the co-sponsors of the talks are turning a blind eye to Israel's illegal practices of altering the demographic composition of the occupied territories through settling Jewish emigrants on Arab lands and expelling Palestinians.

We, in the Arab World, believe that the EC's active participation in the peace negotiations can advance the attainment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

More 'light', please!

To the Editor:

UTTERLY started by the new item included in the "Weekender" (Jordan Times Sept. 3) under the heading "On the lighter side" (P.13.). I and many other friends openly deem such a useful work and sincere effort on your part an additional welcome to your newspaper which, without doubt, reflects sagacity of choice and refined taste. Yet, we have some suggestions, hoping they would be taken into your resourceful consideration in the coming issues:

— Assigning adequate place for more varieties such as maxims, world peculiarities, funny anecdotes, selections from ancient and modern Arabic poetry, etc.

— We see it more comfortable to provide solutions a day or two after the date of issue so as to give ample time for meditation and research.

— What prevents you, dear sir, from altering the general knowledge questions and puzzles to a "competition form" and allotting symbolic prizes for the readers who give the right answers to them?

Lamia Alami,
Jabal Amman,
Amman.

Light laughter

To the Editor:

THIS took place during my flight from Jordan to Egypt when, to my greatest surprise and joy, I caught sight of an attractive heading "On The Lighter Side" in your creditable newspaper last week.

I was, indeed, very much interested in reading this sort of funny, informative and concise material which I myself consider a nutritious vitamin for both the Jordanian and foreign readers.

So I could not help but send this humble letter to express my deepest thanks, admiration and appreciation for such a good selection, hoping that one day the items included could be expanded on a wider scale with more typical and fantastic varieties.

F. B. Adams,
Grand Hotel,
Cairo, Egypt.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Lost city of Petra continues to enchant

By Phillippe Neave

AMMAN — Rising out of the flat rocky desert, far off in the distance a group of mountains shimmers in the heat. For thousands of years, travelers passed by these tall hills along the caravan route, unaware that they hid a wonderful treasure — Petra, the Lost City. This is where Moses is said to have struck a rock whence water poured forth. Generations of explorers searched for the mythical stone city inhabited by the Nabateans, an ancient kingdom of Arabs, under whom it prospered as a commercial centre on the spice route. In the 1st century A.D. Petra disappeared from history until it was discovered in the early 19th century by a Swiss explorer.

A small group of horses follow each other in single file. Moving slowly, they wind down a narrow gorge. On either side of the riders, huge walls of rock tower above, leaving just a glimpse of the clear, blue sky. This is the "siq," the narrow opening in the mountains that

provides the only entrance to the magical "Rose Red City".

Without warning, the siq turns a corner and opens up. Carved in the sheer face of the mountain is a gigantic tomb with an elegant facade adorned with columns hundreds of feet tall. Strata of rock coloured in pink, rose, violet, orange and red glow in the sunlight.

Any number of superlatives would not suffice to describe the magic of Petra. And from this notion sprang an original idea — to entrust this task to those who do it best — professional writers. A project is currently underway, sponsored jointly by the Jordanian Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism and the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Amman, to do just that. Six of the Arab World's leading writers and six of France's most noted literary figures have been invited to the enchanting city.

The idea was the brainchild of Philippe Cardinal, France's cultural attaché in

Jordan. An Arabist, he has lived many years in different countries of the Middle East.

"The project consists of bringing the chosen writers successively to Petra to spend a week or so there. Each is to write a text of fiction, a short story. We will have six in the Arabic language and six in French," explains 43-year-old Cardinal. He is a well-known figure in literary circles, having translated into French works by leading Arab writers such as Youssef Idress, Nabil Naoum and, most recently, by the Lebanese writer Rachid Al Daif.

The book will be published in French and Arabic under the title "Short Stories From Petra" (Des Nouvelles de Petra). It will be illustrated by photographers Fouad Al Khoury, Bernard Guillot, Thierry Girard, Francois Sagnes and Jean-Philippe Reverdot. Also planned as part of the project is an exhibition of each photographer's work to be held in Paris and Amman, coinciding with the launching of the book in the

Spring of 1993. Most of the writers and photographers have now been to Petra and are hard at work. Some writers have already submitted manuscripts.

"As far as I know," says Mr. Cardinal, "There has never been a project of this sort. The book will bring together works by the leading Arab and French writers of the moment." The list of authors is impressive. On the Arab side, it includes Egypt's Nabil Naoum and Gamal Al Ghitani, Adonis of Lebanon and arguably the Arab World's foremost contemporary poet, Abdul Salam Al Ujayli of Syria, Palestinian-born Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (now an Iraqi national) and Jordan's Jamal Abu Hamdan.

The French side is equally imposing: Jean-Marie Le Clezio, author of some 30 stories and winner of a prestigious literary prize for *The Verbal Process* (Le Procès Verbal); Moroccan-born Tahar Ben Jelloun; Abdul Wahab Meddeb of Tunisia; American-born Anne Wade Minowski who adopted France many years ago and is famous not only for her own writing but for her translations of a number of works by leading Arab authors; and Claude Ollier and Michel Butor, two of France's leading literary figures.

"The authors were chosen according to two criteria," explains Mr. Cardinal. "The French writers were selected because of their declared sympathy for the Arab World, expressed either in their works or through the public stand they take. The Arabs were chosen for their obvious literary talents and because they have shown in their writings a particular interest for archaeological sites."

For example, Nabil Naoum, who recently published a French translation of *Return To The Temple* to wide acclaim, has written many short stories inspired by famous Egyptian archaeological sites in which time is fluid and the lines that separate the ancient past from the present are blurred.

Jordan's Jamal Abu Hamdan was an obvious choice. A prolific writer of novels, short stories, essays, press articles and children's books, Mr. Abu Hamdan also authored a 15-hour series on Petra for BBC television. In 30 episodes, the series tells the history of Petra through the ages and has been broadcast several times throughout the Middle East.

"What I wrote on Petra for this project is very different," explained Mr. Abu Hamdan in an interview. "In some ways it is difficult because I have introduced a nonclassical technique, something new. The subject is in itself a little strange and unexpected... The writing is a mix of poetic fiction with a Sufi dimension and a mix of myth and historical reality."

The 48-year-old author is also a lawyer and a political figure who stood as an independent progressive candidate in Jordan's 1989 parliamentary elections. Without giving too much away, Mr. Abu Hamdan broadly described the inspiration he gained from spending time in the mysterious city. "I placed the emphasis on the human being rather than the stone. I think that in history, the human being is the key. I have tried to clarify the idea of the cycle of life and death, destruction and renewal, and introduced Sodom and Gomorrah."

The central character of Mr. Abu Hamdan's story is a rock sculptor who lives out many different roles throughout the history and myth of Petra. "I have been to Petra many times and every time I go it inspires something new and I write something completely different in content and style. Whenever I go to Petra, I see what the tourists don't see. I see beyond what they see with my imagination."

Certainly Petra inspires. As an archaeological site, it is unique in the region, which is dotted by famous Greek and Roman ruins. This is the only vestige of an ancient Arab civilisation in the area. Adds the Jordanian writer, "When you walk down the siq and

come out of it, it is like a vision. The charm of Petra is this vision, this surprise."

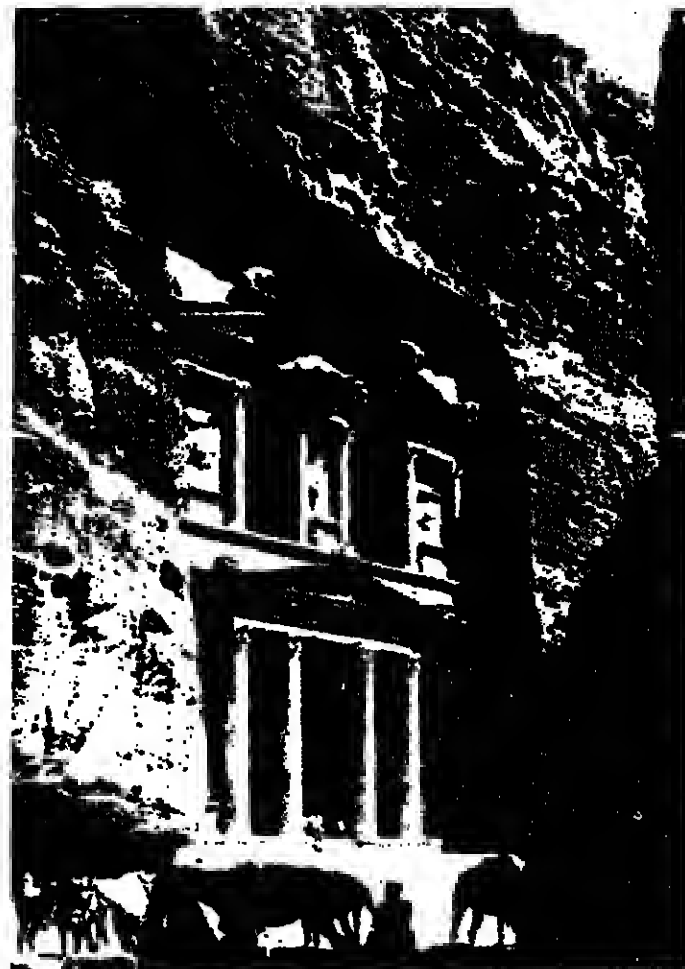
Mr. Abu Hamdan shares the enthusiasm of the other writers involved in the project, which he hopes will not only produce a kaleidoscope of impressions of Petra but also promote and enhance Arab fiction in the West. Abu Hamdan also believes this multicultural mix will benefit both Arab and Western culture. "In order for Arab culture to gain its position among world cultures, it must define its identity. It must know itself and understand itself. Then it will be able to understand and add to other cultures."

The project may also contribute to a better understanding of Arab culture in the West. Mr. Hamdan says, "The West's vision of Arab culture has been affected by many things, mostly non-cultural. The image of the Arab Orient in the West has come from the battles between Europe and the Arabs. Unfortunately, their first encounter was through the Crusades, so the relationship was marked with hostility from the beginning."

This hostile view continued throughout history to modern times, and it was only in the 19th century, with the publication of the classic *One Thousand And One Nights*, that Westerners began to see the Arab World in a romantic, imaginary perspective. "The West's view was either hostile or this fanciful imaginary world. Both are far from reality," he says.

Even though this century has also been marked by hostility, Mr. Abu Hamdan believes that Arab culture is regaining its rightful place. "The Arab cultural movement today still needs to purify itself of what has been accumulated in the past. It needs to look at itself with a realistic eye. From this objective view, creativity will emerge and impose itself in the West. Arab culture today must grow. We cannot gain the respect of others if we do not respect ourselves."

Critics are awaiting the publication of *Short Stories*



The ancient rose red fortress city of Petra was inhabited by the Nabateans who were mostly merchants; one prominent example of their architecture is Al Khazneh, the Treasury, above.

From Petra, which will be something of a showcase for contemporary Arab literature. Although the novel — and the short story — are relatively recent genres in a literary tradition that is mostly based on poetry and storytelling, many see it arriving at a new level of maturity. Tribute to this was the awarding in 1988 of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz.

Says Mr. Abu Hamdan, "Recently, the novel has been developing fast. Witness to that is the large number of novels that are being translated into other languages. This is a confirmation that the Arab novel is being recognised in countries where the novel is strong."

Mr. Cardinal has already read several manuscripts and is enthusiastic about the results. "Each is very different in style, subject and everything. The writers have had complete freedom to do what they wanted. Petra is not the subject but the location, the

frame that inspires everything." Mr. Cardinal, who will translate some of the authors, will also oversee all the translation work in both languages. He has chosen outstanding translators for this task.

The aim of the project is not literary only. It is hoped that a collection of works by authors of such a high calibre will encourage people to read about Petra and go there. Explains Mr. Cardinal, "tourists have stopped coming to Jordan since the Gulf War. I have tried to create a project that would be of cultural interest as well as promoting Jordan as a place to visit. I am ... convinced that people ... visit places they have read about in books.... Petra is as beautiful and impressive as the major archaeological sites in Egypt. If Petra captures the imagination of people through the works of these great writers, I feel sure people will want to... see it" — World News Link.



Philippe Cardinal, (left) the French Cultural attaché in Jordan, with Jordan's Jamal Abu Hamdan, a prolific writer who has also authored a 15-hour series on Petra for BBC Television.

Ten years after Grace's death, Monaco is still mourning

By Penelope Hocking-Vigie
Reuters

MONTE CARLO — Ten years after the death of the former Grace Kelly, Monaco is still struggling to recapture the sparkle she gave this sleepy principality with her Hollywood glamour and personal charm.

Prince Rainier, 69, remains alone in his palace. Their widowed daughter Caroline, 35, has made her life elsewhere, to the chagrin of many of Prince Rainier's

subjects. Their son, Albert, 34, shows no signs of settling down to give the tiny country an heir.

The third child Stephanie, 27, is pregnant out of wedlock with the baby of one of her former bodyguards, Daniel Ducruet, now owner of a fish-importing business.

"We miss Princess Grace terribly," said a Monegasque florist. "She can never be replaced. What we need is for Albert to make a splendid marriage, so we can be happy

again." The former American film star's marriage in 1956 to the ruler of one of the world's tiniest states has often been described as a fairy tale.

It ended with her tragic death on Sept. 14, 1982, when the car she was driving plunged over a parapet on a steep winding road behind Monaco.

Since then, the family's image of propriety has not been easy to maintain. Details of their private lives, especially those of the children, com-

pete with those of the British royal family for the front pages of popular magazines.

The tumultuous love life of Princess Stephanie has shocked her father's subjects, always fiercely loyal to their prince.

After much publicised romances with racing car driver Paul Belmondo, film star's son Anthony Delon, nightclub owner Mario Juttard and musician Ron Bloom, Stephanie announced her engagement in 1990 to Jean-Yves Le Fur, only to break it off a few months later.

The announcement in June of her pregnancy met with shock and embarrassment in the principality.

Stephanie was photographed earlier this year with her bathing suit folded down over her rounded stomach, revealing her breasts. Her baby is due in November.

"We suffer for Prince Rainier, said the florist, echoing the feelings expressed by many other Monaco residents. "We know he's unhappy. If only Princess Grace were here, things would be different."

One bright note was the Vatican's recent annulment of Princess Caroline's first marriage to Philippe Junot in 1978, which ended in divorce in 1980.

It legitimises the three children she had with her second husband, Italian businessman Stefano Casiraghi, who died in a speedboat accident in October 1990.

Shortly after the Vatican's decision, the people of Monaco were delighted to

see the princess, looking radiant, at the Red Cross charity ball, the most glittering social event of the season. It was her first appearance at the gala since Mr. Casiraghi's death.

They were less pleased to learn that from September, the three children of the marriage would attend school in Caroline's provincial retreat of St Remy, near Avignon. Her decision is seen as a sure sign that she will not be in Monaco so often.

"The annulment is a good thing. It brings her second marriage into line with the church, and regularises the situation of the children," said a perfume-seller.

"But her intention to live in St Remy has disappointed a lot of people."

Princess Caroline married Mr. Casiraghi in a civil ceremony in 1983. For a while Monaco basked in happiness as the princess took over official functions with much of her mother's elegance and charm.

But Mr. Casiraghi's death plunged the principality into mourning once again. Now Princess Caroline spends most of her time in her St Remy villa, often in the company of French actor Vincent Lindon.

Prince Albert has said he would like to marry some day, but not just to please other people.

German-born top model Claudia Schiffer has been at his side at gala functions, but this summer he was photo-



The late Princess Grace of Monaco

graphed on a yacht, kissing the foot of an unidentified young blonde woman.

Stephanie and Ducruet — already the unmarried father

of a young child — have said that they will marry one day, "but not under obligation."

Every year on the anniversary of Princess

Grace's death, grieving Monegasques lay flowers on her tomb in the grey stone cathedral perched on the rock near the palace.



from left to right) Princess Stephanie, Princess Caroline and Prince Rainier remember Princess Grace on the anniversary of her death.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Sept. 17

8:30 Empty Nest

Final Analysis

9:10 W.L.O.U.

A young reporter hijacks the T.V. station.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Movie Of The Week

The Razor's Edge

Starring: Bill Murray

A powerful drama about love, social barriers, friendship and the joy of living.

Friday, Sept. 18

8:30 Golden Girls

9:10 The Good Guys

10:00 News In English

10:20 El C.L.D.

Thursday's Child

Bromley falls for an English widow, and Blake discovers a horse smuggling gang.

11:10 The Powers That Be

Senator Powers tries to run a positive, clean campaign, but his wife and aides try to destroy his opponent.

Saturday, Sept. 19

8:30 Super Bloopers and New Practical Jokes.



Brian Fox stars in Red Fox on Wednesday at 10:20

9:00 Life On The Land

9:30 Varieties

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film

Beasts

Starring: Tom Bakston Kathy Christopher.

Sunday, Sept. 20

8:30 Coach

9:10 Documentary — Land Of Bird

Thousands of birds come and leave annually to Queensland, Australia, where they

come from or go to is a mystery.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Midnight Caller

Uninvited Guest

Monday, Sept. 21

8:30 Close To Home

James invites Vicky for dinner at home

9:10 Gone To The Dogs

10:00 News In English

10:20 A Portrait Of Tex Avery

Tuesday, Sept. 22

8:30 Acropolis Now

King Of Confidence

9:00 Mr. Bean

9:30 TECK

Needle In A Haystack

Giving in to threats and intimidation is bad for business.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film

Men Are Not Gods

Starring: Miriam Hopkins and Rex Harrison.

Wednesday, Sept. 23

8:30 Saved By the Bell

Zak tries to convince a fake U.S. Air Force officer that Skritch is an Alien but Zak's plan fails.

29:00 Wednesday Forum

9:30 Chuedo

Working Funeral

Studio audience are asked to make their deductions regarding the scene of the crime, the murder weapon and the suspect of the crime which took place at Arlington.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Red Fox

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

Did you know?

— The moose are very large deer with huge antlers. They eat leaves and branches, especially water willows, and they also enjoy water plants. They are found in North America and in Europe, where they are known as elk.

— Funny enough, the biggest bird in the world is one that cannot fly — the ostrich. It is nearly 2.5 metres (8 feet) tall, and can weight 135 kgs (300 lbs) or more.

— The lion has been the symbol of strength for centuries. Certainly he frightens other animals and human beings, but there are in fact several other beasts that can outsmart and defeat him.

— The Pathans are a fierce tribe of warriors who live in parts of Afghanistan and in North-West Pakistan.

— When a skunk is irritated or frightened, it turns round on its enemy, lifts its tail and squirts from special glands a jet of very nasty-smelling fluid which can burn the eyes of any other animal or human if it touches them.

Arabic names and their meanings

Othman: the serpent
Khawla: the she-deer
Tasfir: the small river / the creek
Adnan: the person residing in one place
Haltham: the falcon
Osama: the lion
Rana: the beauty
Hussam: the sword
Suhail: a famous star
Sawsan: a good-smelling flower

Jokes and cracks

Farmer: What are you doing up in that tree, boy?
Boy: (Evasively) One of your apples fell down, and I'm trying to put it back!



"I have brought my grandmother with me. She will be a great help to us in the woods: she can prepare our dinner and wash up."

The little boy's voice in the crowded bus clamorously asked his mother:
"Is our (cat) male or female?"
Patiently the mother answered: "It's a male cat."
"How could you know it's male?"
After a short silence during which the passengers were meditatively listening for how she would tackle such a question and challenge, she simply replied: "Because it has whiskers, hasn't he?"

Puzzles

1) DIVIDING £480

Anson, Benson, and Carson had £480 between them which they wished to divide equally amongst themselves. To do this, Anson, who had the most, gave to Benson and Carson as much as they already had.
Next Benson divided with Anson and Carson by giving them as much as they had after Benson's division. They then each had the same amount.
How much did each have to start with?

2) FIND THE GIRLS

Take one letter from each of the seven words shown in the diagram so that they spell a girl's name, the letters being used in their present order.
Now make three more feminine names in the same way.
Every letter must be used, but NONE more than once.

B	A	R	E
D	A	L	E
B	E	E	R
B	A	L	E
C	A	I	N
C	O	R	N
A	R	E	A

3) ROPE CLIMBING

The ropes were of equal lengths. Tibury climbed five feet while Nogo climbed four feet, and each competitor came down twice as fast as he went up. Tibury passed Nogo six feet from the top. By How many feet did he win?

Fast quiz

- 1) If you were born and bred on the banks of the Hwang Ho, what would be your nationality?
- 2) Muslims always face the same direction when they pray. What is the name of the building within a mosque that they are facing?
- 3) Where were the terms of the surrender at the end of the American Civil War signed?
- 4) The speaker presides over debates in the British House of Commons, but who presides over debates in the House of Lords?
- 5) In what city would you be if you paid the taxi-driver in roubles to take you to the Bolshoi Theatre?
- 6) What famous battle took place after the Congress of Vienna?
- 7) In a monastery, what is the refectory used for?
- 8) What are the three countries that form the European Customs Union known as Benelux?

Sounds of silence

By E. Yaghi

Najah Taffal was born deaf. This means that she has never heard the sound of falling rain, the magic ripple of her children's laughter or the agonies of their cries, the ring of a telephone, the honking horns or cars, the songs of early morning birds or any other sounds that we may find either annoying or precious to our ears and which we tend to take for granted. She was born twenty-eight years ago in Amman and when she was old enough, attended the Salt School for the Deaf until the sixth grade. She then left school and started to learn sewing but also quit because she didn't like it. When she was fourteen and a half years old, she got married to a deaf man and had three children. While marriage for a young deaf girl could have seemed like the end of all hope for any kind of decent future and may well have fated her to working at menial jobs, Najah's marriage apparently gave birth to the emergence of her true spirit of resolve and determination to not only better her life but the lives of as many deaf people as she can.

When I first met Najah at the clean modern Specialised Audiology Centre, I sensed that she was a bright young woman and I saw excitement and spirit flash in her dark eyes as she tried to converse with me in her native tongue-sign language. To my distress, Manal Hamzeh, the directors of the centre, left Najah and me alone for a few minutes to see how well we could communicate together and to give me a chance to almost feel how it is to be deaf. As soon as Manal went out of the room, I perceived that I was the one who was deaf for there was no effective way for me to adequately express myself or understand her. Before this isolation I had noticed how well she and Manal could converse with each other in sign language and how I enviously watched them as if I were hearing a new and strange language for the first time, a complete foreigner, for Manal and Najah were quite fluent in sign language. However, Najah and I sat down at a round white table and tried to "talk" with each other. We ended up by laughing at our efforts while we tried to draw silly pictures and make gestures but we didn't make much progress.

Manal saved me from further embarrassment and from then on served as our mutual interpreter. Through her I learned that Najah studied both Arabic and English typing even though she couldn't hear. She is presently employed at the Specialised Audiology Centre and makes use of her typing skills. Before she came to work with Manal, she was the first deaf woman to work in the government, a position she held for two years. She also became interested in establishing a deaf women's club because there weren't any but there were deaf men's clubs. Deaf women had been left out, therefore, the National Speech and Hearing Centre where she worked, encouraged her to start one. In addition, some friends came from the United States and persuaded the centre to teach sign language and interpreting. The centre wisely understood that the best person suited to teach such courses was a deaf one, hence, Najah began her second job as instructor of sign language. She published the first sign language book in Jordan which contained about 300 signs.

Parents of deaf children were also prompted to learn sign language. Previously, communication between parents and their deaf children was almost impossible, but courses in sign language enabled these parents to correspond with their children. Najah consequently started teaching courses for the deaf at the University of Jordan through the Friends of Handicapped Students for a period of three months. At present, all deaf clubs give these courses.

Since Najah believes it is her duty to help all deaf people,

she went on a trip to the Society For The Handicapped in Gaza. The situation there differs sharply from that in Jordan, for Gaza is a very difficult place to live in due to extreme overcrowding and the conditions of occupation and oppression. It is often the case that people all over the world stigmatise the deaf as handicapped and therefore, lacking intelligence. True, being deaf is indeed a handicap, but then every person has some sort of handicap or other and deafness is an obstacle that can be surmounted by the improvement of other senses which become more acute and further, being deaf has nothing to do with how smart or stupid a person is. In Gaza, Najah taught her course to fifty teachers who work in home intervention programmes and she raised their awareness about language and deafness. Besides teaching courses, she went to some homes of deaf children who were taking classes and realised that the sign language level there was too low. It is imperative that deaf children have continuous contact with each other. They shouldn't be isolated in their homes, for no man is an island, but exposed to role models of deaf adults. Najah recommended this idea to the director of the society. She also aims to gather and develop deaf leaders who are proud of themselves.

She insists that it is vital that all mothers of deaf children learn sign language. When the Gaza mothers saw her, they were very surprised and asked, "Are you really deaf? You are so smart and active!"

Najah's goal is not to be on her own as a deaf leader, but to concentrate on procuring other leaders. In Gaza, the Society For The Handicapped approved the sign language programme that she will be a big part of. At this time, there are no deaf clubs there, unlike Jordan where there are many now. People in Gaza are very suppressed. Najah hopes by working hard in three to four years the Gazans will have their own clubs. She finds Gaza to be a great challenge in spite of the occupation and the intense effort required of her. She doesn't mind working to improve things. Even without a degree, there is an inborn talent in her to teach her mother tongue which is sign language. She has also written and organised courses for sign language and the Ministry of Social Development is taking her course curriculum as a guide for other clubs to give and use. Such courses are best taught by a deaf person and not a hearing one. This is the first time that a real guide has been employed for these courses.

As mentioned earlier, Najah has three children. Even though their parents are both deaf, the three children hear. The eldest son, age 11, interprets for his mother. All the children attend private schools in order to have a good background in both Arabic and English. Najah knows the importance of giving her children the advantage of a good education because she didn't have such an opportunity. Her son wants to attend college and work with the deaf when he grows up but his mother says that he must make his own decisions. Whatever she has lost in sound and education, she more than makes up for these shortcomings with an automatic mind which keeps innovating things to do for the deaf. It is her dream that the deaf here in Jordan will be like those in America with the same opportunities and advancements. She is very fortunate to have a patient and wise husband who lets her be what she must and let's her struggle for those goals that make her life have meaning. Manal Hamzeh has also continuously encouraged Najah's progress and saw the potential for "greatness" in her. As for myself, I was truly inspired by Najah and her work. Whenever I feel depressed, I remember this small woman with the sparkling eyes who refused to give up just because she is surrounded by the sounds of silence.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Thursday, Sept. 17

1948 — Sweden's Count Folke Bernadotte, United Nations mediator in Arab-Israeli conflict over Palestine, is slain near Jerusalem by Jewish terrorists and is succeeded by Dr. Ralph Bunche of the United States.

1949 — Fire destroys Noronic, largest passenger steamer on Great Lakes, at Toronto (Canada) pier, killing more than 130 people.

1963 — Malaysia breaks off diplomatic relations with Indonesia because of what it describes as President Sukarno's increased hostility.

1964 — United States discloses development of two weapons systems capable of intercepting and destroying armed satellites circling the Earth.

1967 — Riot during soccer game in Turkey kills 42 people and injures 600 others.

1978 — Egypt's President Anwar Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin conclude meeting at Camp David (U.S.) with signing of framework for Middle East peace.

1980 — Exiled Nicaraguan leader Anastasio Somoza is assassinated in explosion that wrecks his car in Asuncion, Paraguay.

Friday, Sept. 18

1916 — Greek army surrenders to Germans at Kavala, Greece, in World War I; Russian offensive under Alexei Brusilov is checked by Germans.

1961 — U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, 56, is killed in air crash in northern Rhodesia.

1971 — Egypt and Israel exchange rocket fire across Suez Canal for first time since ceasefire 13 months earlier.

1973 — East Germany, West Germany and the Bahamas are admitted to United Nations.

1978 — Egypt's Foreign Minister Ibrahim Kamel and Ambassador to United States Ashraf Ghorbal resign in protest of Egypt's Camp David (U.S.) agreement with Israel.

1979 — Radio Pakistan reports that former Afghanistan President Nur Mohammad Taraki, overthrown in coup, died of gunshot wound apparently suffered in palace shootout.

1988 — Burma's military Commander San Maung overthrows Burma's civilian President Maung Maung in coup.

1990 — Answering U.S. call for more severe sanctions, European nations agree to expand embargo against Iraq to include air corridors.

1990 — French surrenders Versailles to Germans in Franco-Prussian War.

1941 — Germans take Kiev in Soviet Union in World War II.

1955 — Argentina's President Juan Peron is ousted from office after revolts by army and navy.

1962 — China announces it has shelved plans to turn nation into an industrial power within a few years.

1968 — Czech Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek resigns under Soviet pressure.

1971 — Outgoing U.N. Secretary-General U Thant pleads with World Organisation to grant his successor more power.

1972 — Israeli diplomat is killed and another injured when letter bomb explodes at Israeli embassy in London.

1978 — Egypt's cabinet approves unanimously President Anwar Sadat's Camp David agreement to sign peace treaty with Israel within three months.

1989 — Arrest warrants issued in Colombia for two

Israelis accused of training death squads for drug lords.

1990 — Iraq seizes foreign assets owned by countries participating in embargo against Iraq; Soviet newspaper prints 15-page article by Alexander Solzhenitsyn calling for breakup of the Soviet Union.

1970 — National unification of Italy is achieved.

1977 — Vietnam is admitted to United Nations.

1988 — Soldiers from two more army units in Haiti oust their commanders in revolt that started three days previously.

1989 — Indian peacekeeping troops declare ceasefire in their two-year-old battle against Tamil guerrillas fighting for independent nation.

1990 — Both Germanys ratify treaty that will dissolve east Germany and allow it to merge with west Germany on Oct. 3.

1991 — In Vukovar, Yugoslavia, federal troops break through Croatian defences and part of the city falls.

1970 — French surrenders Versailles to Germans in Franco-Prussian War.

1941 — Germans take Kiev in Soviet Union in World War II.

1955 — Argentina's President Juan Peron is ousted from office after revolts by army and navy.

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1989 — Arrest warrants issued in Colombia for two

Dongola in the Sudan.

1898 — Tzu-Hsi, dowager empress of China, seizes power and revokes reforms.

1922 — United States establishes a protectionist tariff.

1939 — Premier Armand Calinescu of Romania is assassinated by the Iron Guard.

1949 — West Germany comes into existence as U.S., British and French occupation zones are transferred to German control; People's Republic of China is proclaimed by its Communist leaders.

1964 — Malta becomes independent state within British Commonwealth.

1969 — More than 120 people are killed in rioting in western India that stems from alleged Muslim abuse of cattle which Hindus regard as sacred.

1978 — Leaders of Syria, Algeria, South Yemen, Libya and Palestine Liberation Organisation announce in Damascus (Syria) they are severing relations with Egypt because of that nation's accord with Israel.

1985 — Mexico counts at least 2,000 dead from earthquake that devastated four states.

1987 — Iraqi warplanes make bombing forays deep into Iran in Gulf war.

1988 — Cong leader General San Maung is named Burma's prime minister.

1990 — Saddam Hussein says Iraq would "fight to the finish" in a war with United States and Iraq orders expulsion from its territory of military attaches from all EC countries.

1991 — Croatia offers to ease its blockade of military barracks if federal forces halt their offensive, but Yugoslav defence leaders show no sign of limiting their attacks.

1991 — Croatia offers to ease its blockade of military barracks if federal forces halt their offensive, but Yugoslav defence leaders show no sign of limiting their attacks.

1896 — British force under Horatio Kitchener takes

By The Associated Press

The Arts

Marwan Shamiyeh — a slave of his voice

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — What do singing and singing have in common? Marwan Shamiyeh, a 23 year old certified lawyer who is pursuing a career in music as an operatic tenor.

Mr. Shamiyeh, tall, broad-shouldered with dark hair and expressive brown eyes greeted me with an impeccable English accent, acquired from the British system New English School in Kuwait, and the London School of Economics where he received his degree in law. He spoke about his plans to become a professional musician instead of pursuing a career in law.

"I studied law because I like law, but I like music even more. This is why I plan to make a career out of music."

said Mr. Shamiyeh, who will complete his Masters Degree in law by September of next year.

"I am continuing my studies in law because that would provide a strong basis for any career. Hopefully law would help me in negotiating future music contracts," he added jokingly.

Mr. Shamiyeh's passion for music started at an early age. He remembers being selected in class to sing solo at a school concert when he was six, "and since then it was on and off in pursuing voice," he said explaining that at the age of eleven, for instance, he had to "take a break from voice when his voice broke."

But throughout his experience in music, Mr. Shamiyeh feels he has been very lucky to have all the support from

his music teachers and family who all helped him in considering music as a career.

After being assessed by voice experts in Britain and Italy he was assured that with training and commitment he can "go a long way". But the final decision is left to Mr. Shamiyeh. "This is something I appreciate and I feel very grateful about all the encouragement I have been getting throughout," said Mr. Shamiyeh, who says he is slightly apprehensive about lifestyle as a musician.

"I really don't know what to expect as a musician. It would be completely different from a lifestyle as a lawyer mainly because one no longer has a private life and time is no longer yours alone. Apart from all that, law is more logical while

music is emotional, and while logic and emotion complement each other, I am more drawn towards music," he said.

Mr. Shamiyeh is practicing avidly for his concert at the Royal Cultural Centre on Sept. 19 and 20 in which he will be performing alongside soprano Tania Nasser, and accompanied by the pianist Siham Badour.

He is taking all the necessary precautions to preserve his voice. "I avoid mints and the types of food I do not feel comfortable with. I keep away from fizzy drinks, passive smoking and most definitely active smoking," Mr. Shamiyeh said, adding that as a professional, he will have to be careful about every aspect in his lifestyle and work on keeping a "sound mind in a sound, rested body."

"Eventually a singer becomes a prisoner of his own voice," said Mr. Shamiyeh, whom professionals assessed as having a "rare old-fashioned quality that is all but lost today." Mr. Shamiyeh said that this is mainly because orchestras are larger these days and musicians have jeopardised quality for a more powerful and somewhat dry voice that can be heard well above the instruments.

About the concert itself, Mr. Shamiyeh explained that it will be divided into two sections the first of which is designed to be lighter, consisting almost exclusively of single neapolitan songs that do not have any other context. On the other hand the heavier second section, composed of arias (songs written for a single voice), will be excerpts from major operatic works.

"Because of the fact that the arias come from a whole, and because the audience will be at a disadvantage, I will be acting out and interpreting the works that will include Italian, French, German and English excerpts, spanning a range of operatic repertoires from the early 18th century to the late 19th century," said Mr. Shamiyeh, who will be taking up acting to aid him in his future music performances.

The proceeds from the event at the RCC will be used for charity.

He said that the sound projection at the RCC, which was not designed for singing, is not ideal, but he feels that this fact is not insurmountable but emphasised that the weaker sound projection can be overcome with practice and, again, acting.



Marwan Shamiyeh

Gandhi's reclusive widow writes of her turmoil

By Raju Gopalakrishnan
Reuters

NEW DELHI — Fifteen months after her husband was assassinated, the reclusive widow of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has written about the three deaths which changed her life and marriage.

Italian-born Sonia Gandhi writes of how she opposed her husband's entry into politics and how she pleaded with him not to become prime minister after his mother, Indira Gandhi, was killed in her garden by Sikh bodyguards.

Rajiv was being groomed as India's successor after his elder brother, Sanjay died in a plane crash.

"I was angry and resentful towards a system which, as I saw it, demanded him as a sacrificial lamb," she says in her book, Rajiv, published by Viking, Penguin, India. "It would crush him and destroy him — of that I was absolutely certain."

Although the coffee-table sized book — a compendium of letters, writings and photographs of and by Rajiv — is very expensive by Indian standards, at 1,500 rupees (about \$50), interest is high. It also appeared to be selling quite well one week after launch. "I've sold 12 in a

week, and at that price it's not a bad sale," said one Delhi bookshop owner.

Shy and retiring even in her years as the country's first lady, Sonia Gandhi appeared to have withdrawn even more after the assassination of her husband by a suicide bomber at an election rally on May 21 last year.

The Indian government says the assassination was planned and carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a group fighting for a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka.

The government has charged 29 people with murder, including the fugitive LTTE chief Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Sonia Gandhi has rarely been seen in public since her husband's funeral and firmly dismissed suggestions that she should enter politics. But she remains a major figure and her infrequent public appearances generate intense interest.

Sonia, the daughter of a middle-class Tamil businessman, married Rajiv Gandhi in 1968 after an unlikely romance in the British university town of Cambridge.

He began working as a commercial pilot with Indian Airlines, the domestic carrier, and he and Sonia lived



Sonia Gandhi

in the family home in New Delhi. "There was only one person in her world to whom she could turn for help," she wrote.

"I fought like a tigress — for him, for us and our children, for the life we had made together, his flying which he loved, our uncomplicated, easy friendships, and, above all, for our freedom. That simple human right which we had so carefully and consistently preserved."

was broken in spirit," she wrote. "There was only one person in her world to whom she could turn for help."

"Finally, I realised that I could no longer watch Rajiv being torn apart," she said.

"He was my Rajiv, we loved each other, and if he felt that he ought to offer his help to his mother, then I would bow to those forces which were now beyond me to fight, and I would go with him wherever they took him."

Rajiv Gandhi was elected to parliament from his brother's constituency. He was campaigning in West Bengal state when his mother was shot and killed on Oct. 31, 1984.

Although just a junior parliamentarian at the time, Rajiv Gandhi was asked to take over the post by party colleagues.

"I begged him not to let them do this," his widow says. "I pleaded with him, with others around him, too. He would be killed as well. He held my hands, hugged me, tried to soothe my desperation. He said 'I don't know, he said he would be killed anyway'."

She then writes of her life as the prime minister's wife, for the depth of feeling people had for him, and the rushed tours and long office hours.

Rajiv Gandhi resigned af-

ter his Congress Party failed to gain a majority in the 1989 general elections and his wife says the ensuing easier pace, at times, "brought back memories of our life as it had been in the beginning, and the flavour of the one we would have had if we had been able to choose for ourselves."

She also writes about constantly worrying about his safety, and how the new government withdrew Rajiv's specialised security cover and replaced it with a force not trained for this specific task.

Fresh elections were announced in April 1991, and Rajiv Gandhi plunged into the campaign, working an average of 20 to 22 hours a day.

"His body was bruised and aching," Sonia said. "It broke my heart to see him in that state. 'Yes, it hurts,' he said. 'But it doesn't matter.'"

On May 20, his widow says, it was time for him to go once again.

"I would now see him, as he himself announced cheerfully, in just two more days. We bade each other a tender goodbye ... and he was off. 'I watched him, peeping from behind a curtain, till he disappeared from view ... this time forever.'"

'Tsarina' leads artists to wealth

By Suzanne Possel
Reuters

ST PETERSBURG, Russia — They call her the tsarina of the St Petersburg art world. Galina Volosova's collection may not be as splendid as that in the nearby Winter Palace. But empress Catherine the Great did not start her collection with a group of soggy street artists.

Four years ago, Volosova was working as head of a state library. It was raining hard and she felt sorry for the artists displaying their work on the library's steps.

"I went out on the street to talk about their future," said Volosova, 53. They decided to form an art society.

In four years, the Union of Free Artists has grown from 40 to 968 members.

Until 1986, artists could not exhibit or sell their work in galleries, which were all state-run, unless they had a degree in art. A membership card from the Soviet Union of Artists was as important as a passport.

To be in the union, an artist nearly always had to be in the Communist Party. Now that has changed, and all a St Petersburg artist needs to join the Union of Free Artists is enthusiasm and a monthly fee of five rubles (three cents).

At first, Volosova let them stack their paintings in the 50-seat theatre on the library's first floor. Oils of all kinds sat in the chairs, filled the aisles and covered the miniature stage.

Today, Volosova exhibits the best works of the union artists in her gallery, Nevsky 20, with its new grey and white marble floor — a gift from one of her artists.

Other union artists still prop sentimental watercolours on store window ledges and wait for tourists to spend a few dollars on a souvenir.

In the new gallery, below the reading room where Volosova still works, the average price for a painting is \$200 to \$300.

In February, Nevsky 20 made its biggest sale — \$8,000 for a painting by 24-year-old surrealist Ivan Vanyushka.

"Vanyushka wanted to let it go for \$20," said Volosova, who addresses all her artists as if she were their grandmother.

The painting was valued at \$50,000 at an exhibition in Switzerland, but Volosova decided to bring it back instead of selling it, because most of the money would have gone in taxes.

Her gallery takes 20 per cent commission. Volosova insists she does not make a cent herself and lives on her librarian's salary of 2,000 rubles (\$10) a month.

About 20 to 30 paintings a month are sold at Nevsky 20. Buyers are almost entirely Western tourists, collectors or business people trying to decorate new offices.

Some local artists say Volosova and her Union of Free Artists put commercial interest before artistic integrity by catering to Western art enthusiasts.

Slavinsky finds that funny. "Russians who could afford to buy paintings are now more interested in cars," he says.

Western interest in Soviet art was fanned by Moscow's opening to the West in the 1980s but is now fizzling. Fewer Western dealers are coming to St Petersburg these days, according to Andrei Sherkunov, director of the Palitra Gallery.

But even as foreign interest fades, more and more Russians are moving in on what they see as the profitable art business.

Art galleries and art shops are opening all over the city. Not all dealers are above-board. Some scour dingy corners of the city in search of unsuspecting fresh talent.

Two years ago, Slavinsky was approached by a woman calling herself Veronika. He gave her four paintings to take to Europe.

When she returned, she gave him 2,000 rubles (\$10) and said she could not get a better price.

Months later, a woman from Amsterdam visited Nevsky 20 and asked to see something by Ivan Slavinsky.

"The woman said that she had bought four of his paintings for 500,000 Swiss francs (\$390,000)," said Volosova.

"I showed her photographs of the four paintings Vanyushka had given Veronika. 'Those are my paintings,' she said."

Volosova and Slavinsky never found Veronika. Now, he lets Volosova handle the selling.

New book paints Jackie Gleason as depressive

By Jeffrey Benkoe
Reuters

NEW YORK — Arms outstretched like an overweight penguin, Jackie Gleason seemed to all the world to be a happy-go-lucky, flamboyant, free-spirited bon vivant, with his inviting, "and away we go."

Night after night on the town, he bought drinks for every long-lost "buddy," surrounding himself with high-style living and expensive wardrobes.

At the height of his career, he was the highest paid performer on television. If his pockets were occasionally empty, he would borrow from a friend so he could leave a waiter a big tip.

Five years after his death, a new book, The Great One: The Life and Legend of Jackie Gleason (Doubleday) by William Henry, Time magazine's culture critic,

paints a darker picture of Gleason as a depressed, self-absorbed, occasionally cruel tyrant and alcoholic with few real friends.

"He was deeply depressed, angry, withdrawn," said Henry, who interviewed dozens of associates, friends and collaborators. "Anger was his strongest emotion."

Henry found that Gleason had few real friends, and most of those who did call themselves friends were on his payroll.

While press agents presented Gleason and Art Carney, who played Ed Norton on The Honeymooners television series, as bosom buddies, the reality was quite different.

They never spoke outside the studio. "It was a business matter rather than a friendship," Henry said. Years could go by without the two men speaking. Associates recalled that Gleason viciously stymied

any chance for Carney's star to shine.

But Carney, in interviews with Henry, said he never resented Gleason's refusal to share the spotlight, recalling how Gleason encouraged him to get the biggest laughs.

And when Carney won an Oscar for his role in the movie Harry And Tonto, it was Gleason, who had never won an Academy Award — and deeply wanted one for his role in the film, Gigot — who was the first to congratulate Carney.

Henry discovered other surprises in Gleason's life. The comedian took credit as composer, conductor and producer for some 40 record albums. The credits were fiction, Gleason associates confirmed.

"It's just not so," Henry said. "He absolutely couldn't do it. As a composer, he couldn't compose, as a conductor, he couldn't conduct. He could only hum the first

bars of a song."

Henry suspects Gleason lied to compensate for never having finished high school. "He was very sensitive about not having the intellectual apparatus."

The sensitivity was unneeded. Henry asserts that Gleason's artistry was underestimated. "Gleason at his best had this total confidence in his performance, utterly unhesitating and uncomplicated, but spontaneous and dangerous."

The essence of Gleason's remaining popularity can be tied to his role as Ralph Kramden on The Honeymooners. Contrary to prevailing acting theories, Gleason insisted on being a hot actor in a cool medium.

"Gleason made it bigger and bigger and just got more and more realistic," Henry said. "He was so intense and so theatrical in good way."

Despite his stardom, Gleason's private life was un-

happy. Henry traces his troubled life to a childhood dominated by a possessive, alcoholic mother, who did not enroll him in school until he was eight, an alcoholic father who walked out on the family when Gleason was 10 years old, and the death of an older brother when Gleason was a child.

As a youth, he began in show business as an amuseur at night at a theatre in his native Brooklyn. His mother didn't want him in show business and so, reluctantly, he kept his ambitions in check until he died.

Even her death became an issue for obfuscation. Henry said Gleason tried to gain public sympathy by variously lying about his age when she died. While he claimed to be 13, in reality he was 19, old enough to support himself.

The lie reflected Gleason's guilt at not supporting his mother in her last years. "He knew it was a tough sell to

have been so self-absorbed" about a show biz career, Henry said.

With his mother dead, his egomania grew unchecked.

Gleason's adult life was marked by heavy drinking, regular womanising, tyrannical tirades. His utter devotion to his own career came at the expense of virtually everyone else in his life, Henry found.

Gleason abandoned his own family. Barely a few years into the marriage to his wife, Genevieve, Gleason was living with another woman. He visited his two daughters only on holidays.

Even those who knew him well admit Gleason was ultimately a mystery.

Leonard Stern, a writer for Gleason, and one of the few to see him with his hair down, told Henry, "the truth is, I don't know if I ever met Jackie Gleason. I know I met some portrayal of him."

Celluloid serial killer creates Belgian box-office storm

By Caroline Brothers
Reuters

BRUSSELS — An off-beat thriller made on a shoestring by a team of unknown Belgians created a storm at Cannes and is drawing praise from critics ahead of its international release this year.

Man Bites Dog, a satirical mock documentary in black and white about a serial killer and the camera crew who film him, won three critics' awards at the Cannes Film Festival in May and had distributors fighting for seats.

It has been entered in film festivals from Tokyo to Rio

and been sold in 17 countries, including the Netherlands, Italy and Australia.

Audiences are flocking to the film. Within five days of its Belgian release 13,500 people had seen the film — almost unheard of at peak holiday season.

The 95-minute movie opens with the killer patiently explaining how he gets rid of the bodies.

The film stars the film-makers themselves and their families — the budget was too small to pay professional actors.

"We used our relatives in the secondary roles ... we

told them what we wanted them to say and they said it in their own words," said Remy Belvaux, who conceived the original idea for the film and who plays the interviewer on screen.

"All the actors did it as a favour, and for the pleasure of working together," he told Reuters.

Belvaux and screen killer Benoit Poelvoorde, both 27, are childhood friends. They and co-director Vincent Tavier, 29, are all from the southern Belgian city of Namur. They met the fourth member of their team, Frenchman Andre Bonzel,

32, at the Insas Film School in Brussels.

The production started life as Belvaux's final year project at film school. It took two years to make as the team kept running out of money and had to stop until they earned more.

The total budget was three million Belgian francs (\$102,000). "If we had paid everybody it would have cost 20 million (\$690,000)," Belvaux said.

The film's documentary style is partly due to lack of cash.

"We had no money for a travelling camera or for prop-

er lighting," Belvaux said, adding it was shot originally on 16 mm film because it was cheaper than 35 mm.

But if "Man Bites Dog" — in French the title is "C'est Arrive Pres de Chez Vous" (It Happened In Your Neighbourhood) — looks like a home movie the impression is deceptive.

"The film, and especially Ben's role, is highly scripted and there's a lot of cutting," said Belvaux. Some scenes were meticulously plotted although ad-lib elements occasionally crept in. Most of the "mistakes" were deliberate.

"It's a documentary style but with loads of errors — you can see the microphone and the reflection of the camera in the mirrors, and there's lots of camera movement — we could break all the rules because it was part of the style."

At Cannes it stole the International Critics Prize for feature-length films, the Special Grand Prize of the Young People's Jury, and a \$9,000 Authors' Prize. The film-makers have finally started to pay some of their collaborators.

Audiences have been divided over how to take the

film. The camera crew accompanies the killer on random suburban shooting sprees, including the cold-blooded murder of children, taxi-drivers and the elderly, and on visits to the grocery shop run by his doting parents and grandparents.

Some viewers think certain sequences, like a gang-rape on a kitchen-table, go too far. But laughter greets other scenes whose violence approaches the surreal.

As the crew gets increasingly involved, the film raises questions about the media's obsession with violence and how far it is impli-

cated in the crimes it shows.

"People are ready to do anything for the camera," Belvaux said. "We wanted to comment on the intrusiveness of television, on the hyper-realism of TV violence, of (publications like) Paris Match."

And how are the film-maker coping with all the attention?

"It's all a bit unreal," Belvaux said. "We're all a bit afraid because it's been such a success, and we're worried the next film won't be as good ... but it's great fun going to all the festivals."

No polio cases reported in Western hemisphere in a year

By Joan Sanchez
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The last case of polio in the Western hemisphere was reported more than a year ago — a sign that the paralyzing disease is beginning to be eradicated in the region, U.S. federal health officials reported.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) said the last case of polio in the Western hemisphere was reported Aug. 23, 1991, in Peru. It is the first time since the disease has been monitored in the Western hemisphere that there hasn't been a case reported for an entire year.

The Pan American Health Organization, which launched a polio eradication programme in 1985, planned to announce the same findings Friday in Washington.

"We consider it an impor-

tant achievement in medicine," said Dan Epstein, spokesman for the Pan American Organisation. "It means it's the beginning of eradication."

The World Health Organisation has set a goal of eradicating polio worldwide by the year 2000.

"The apparent elimination of (polio) in the Americas underscores the feasibility of achieving a similar goal in other regions," the CDC said.

Polio is caused by a virus spread through direct contact or through fecal contamination in food and water. The symptoms of polio include paralysis, fever and nausea.

The majority of cases occur in children, and the disease is preventable through immunisation. The disease has affected 10 million people worldwide, according to the Pan American Organisation.

In the Western hemisphere, 1,000 cases of polio were reported in 1986. That dropped to nine cases last year, including the most recent case in Peru in August 1991.

In the Eastern hemisphere, 12,983 polio cases were reported in 1991, the Pan American Organisation said.

The Pan American Organisation has assigned a group of medical experts to monitor the disease and verify its eradication in the region. Three years must pass without a case of polio before it can be declared eradicated, officials said.

Officials expect to be able to certify that polio has been eradicated in the Western hemisphere by 1995.

"The only obstacles have been logistics obstacles — information, communication, convincing people that they have to vaccinate their kids,"

a CDC official said. "Poor people and uneducated people — those are the people we really have to aim towards."

In the late 1970s, only about 10 per cent of children in developing countries were immunised against polio. Today, about 80 per cent of those children are immunised, the Pan American Organisation said.

Health officials say countries must ensure that at least 80 per cent of their infants under 1 are vaccinated for the immunisation programme to be successful.

"To make sure we eradicate polio, we have to keep immunisation at high levels and maintain awareness, a health official said.

Polio is only the second disease to be targeted for eradication. Smallpox was the first target, and health officials declared it eradicated in 1980.

'Infants need only an adult interested in them to thrive'

By Sarah Nordgren
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Infants can develop emotionally without a traditional family as long as an adult or adults show interest in them, researchers said.

With adequate shelter, food and one or more enthusiastic caretakers, most infants build the emotional foundation they need to thrive, experts said at the meeting of the World Association for Infant Mental Health.

"If you wanted to give every child in the world what

they need, you'd give them an adult that was excited that they were alive and wanted to spend time with them," said Dr. Charles Zeanah, a New Orleans psychiatrist and chairman of the five-day meeting.

"Babies don't know what a nuclear family is," he said. "What we know from our research over 10 years indicates that what matters for babies is the patterns of nurturance and care that they receive — and the degree to which they work out a good fit with their environment."

But with dozens of wars worldwide and tens of mil-

lions of people living in poverty, meeting the emotional needs of children is almost impossible in some places, researchers said.

More than 1,000 psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and others came from more than 30 countries for the group's fifth world congress.

Seminars ranging from the effects of long-term hospitalisation on the emotional well-being of youngsters to malnutrition were translated simultaneously in Spanish, French and Japanese.

Experts no longer believe that the first three years of

life are an ironclad indication of how the rest of one's life is led. But they say research clearly has shown that those years are a key foundation.

"The idea that it doesn't have any influence on later life is ridiculous," said Dr. Fitzgerald, a professor at Michigan State University.

The group represents the recent merger of the World Association for Infant Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines — largely dominated by psychiatrists — and the International Association for Infant Mental Health, whose membership consisted largely of non-physicians.

A pain in the head is not simply a headache — there are more than 300 types

Justin Westhoff

HEADACHES are perhaps the most common medical ailments. Fresh air, plenty of sleep, less stress and, if necessary, a couple of pills — that's all you need. Surely no need to see the doctor. People tormented by permanent or intense headaches see things differently — and so do sympathetic doctors.

"There's nothing I'm afraid of more than patients with a headache, and this is where most mistakes are made," Professor Peter Marx, head of the neurology department in the Steglitz Clinic of the Free University of Berlin, admitted during the 41st German Medical Congress.

Family doctors had a chance to find out more about the numerous forms of headache and how strenuous and complicated treatment can be. The causes of headaches — many of them still unknown — are just as varied as the well over 300 types of headache. As the national effort has been mounted to classify headaches and the results of the work were presented to the congress by Professor Dieter Soyka from Kiel.

The main categories: "Idiopathic" headaches (which means headaches for which no physical causes can be identified using today's methods). Included here are migraine, headaches caused by tension, and cluster pains. Then there are "secondary" headaches, which result from an organic illness; "neuralgias," which are attributable to a nervous disorder; and "non-classifiable head and facial pains."

What makes the whole thing even more difficult is that the symptoms occasionally overlap — the human body simply does not like being classified into separate parts. For migraine alone there are numerous sub-groups. Even the "aura" disturbances of sensory perception, such as oversensitivity to light and noise is not necessarily typical for each type of migraine. And those who feel that migraine

can be dismissed as something indescribably female must revise this notion: migraine occurs twice as often among children (of both sexes) than among adults.

Doctors, therefore, must take time to distinguish migraine from other kinds of headache, and treatment differs accordingly. To begin with, said Dr. Karl-Heinz Grottemeyer (University of Münster) an acute migraine attack must be interrupted.

First, the gastro-intestinal tract must be treated to eliminate the nausea and vomiting which accompanies migraine. Ten minutes later, painkillers can be given. Surprisingly, "soft" painkillers such as acetylsalicylic acid (for example, aspirin) or Paracetamol relieve migraine better than "chemical bombs," and even better than morphium derivatives.

As migraine (medical science is not absolutely sure here) is connected with blood vessels, drugs which stabilise the vessels (such as ergotamine) are useful. But if such substances are taken too often for fear of the next attack the pain recurs. Medical experts talk of "ergotamine headache."

There are prophylactic measures for people who suffer from migraine. According to Grottemeyer, these steps should begin at an early stage as possible. Certain heart drugs (especially beta blockers) when the "first-choice methods." Substances which influence the cerebral metabolism — especially isofluride — help some patients. However, prophylaxis does not take effect until after about two months and then only in the case of about a third of all migraine sufferers.

Also, the patient and, in particular, the doctor can make a lot of mistakes, as Grottemeyer emphasised. Apart from mistaken diagnosis, these include prescribing a medical dose which is too low and, above all, providing inadequate information or arousing false hopes.

The most frequent form of headache, however, is "ten-

sion headache." Recent statistics show that over 70 per cent of the population suffer from this type. It generally occurs periodically, in some cases in a chronic form. What probably helps here most is "good advice," and the psychological and social causes should be remedied first.

The situation is different in the case of the much more rare but particularly intense "cluster headache." Only pills can help here, and since they help the doctors should not be too inhibited about the dose, Dr. Walter Paulus from the Grossharden clinic at the Munich University stressed.

"Cluster" pains also occur periodically. They are absolutely unbearable and usually last about three to four weeks before the patient is relieved. Sometimes, the attacks last up to a whole year. Cluster headaches are "strictly one-sided," mainly affecting the forehead, the temples and the eyes, and are accompanied by sweating, watery eyes and a runny nose.

In this case, the first thing which has to be done is to arrest the pain. The best method is a massive application of oxygen. If this doesn't help, ergotamine in spray form or the administration of local anaesthetics in the nose are recommended. A prophylaxis should then begin, which is continued as long as the attacks persist. As opposed to migraine, the success rate for the medicinal prophylaxis of cluster headache attacks is very high.

"Each attack the patient suffers after he has been to see you is one attack too many," Paulus told his colleagues. As 80 per cent of the cases are young men who are otherwise quite healthy, medicinal compounds could

be justifiably administered to prevent the excruciating attacks which would lead to side effects if taken by more sensitive patients.

These include hormones (corticoids) and certain calcium antagonists (verapamil), which would normally be used for heart diseases. Sometimes drugs used in psychiatry can help.

One form of headache is often overlooked by doctors: the toxic form, in other words those caused by poisoning. This was pointed out by Professor Holger Altenkirch, the head of the neurology department at Spandau Hospital. It can be caused by alcohol and medication, by food, indoor pollutants or unhealthy substances at work. Mixed medication, which often contains barbiturates, caffeine and/or codeine, are to blame for "analgesic headaches."

As regards headaches caused by food, the medical experts have come up with some interesting terms. For example, there are "cocktail headaches," "hot-dog headaches," "ice-cream headaches" and the "China restaurant syndrome." All categories indicate that some people cannot "stomach" certain types of food.

Altenkirch urged greater care when dealing with pollutants at work and at home. He also mentioned that some people showed signs of environmental diseases without being exposed to really harmful substances. Such "environmental psychosomatics" may be viewed as "hysterical." The actual pollutants in the human environment, however, not only cause doctors and environmental policy experts headaches, but above all a growing number of patients — Der Tagesspiegel.

Researchers: Cocaine may be responsible in rise in stroke cases

By Paul Reccer
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A sudden rise in the number of patients with cerebral hemorrhage, a type of stroke, may have been caused by the widespread use of cocaine, a researcher said.

Dr. Douglas Chyatte, a Chicago neurosurgeon, said he found evidence of the possible lethal effect of cocaine use while searching hospital records for an explanation of a sudden surge in the state of Connecticut in the number of patients diagnosed as having cerebral hemorrhages.

"The rate of stroke (by cerebral hemorrhage) in Connecticut had been declining for the past several de-

cades, and seemed to level off in the 1970s," Dr. Chyatte said in an interview. "But from 1981 to 1989, the trend suddenly reversed itself and was on the rise again. The rate almost doubled over the decade."

He said the rate of deaths from cerebral hemorrhage in Connecticut rose quickly from 12 per 100,000 population to 20 per 100,000. The number of cerebral hemorrhage cases increased from 376 in 1981 to 604 in 1989 in the state, said the doctor.

In an effort to find the cause, Dr. Chyatte said he examined autopsy reports and found that a number of those who died from cerebral hemorrhage had evidence of cocaine use.

"We found a high percentage, 10 out of 17, had posi-

tive tests for the recent use of cocaine," he said.

He said evidence of the drug was found in patients "of all ages and racial groups."

Cocaine has been directly blamed in earlier studies for heart attacks. The drug is known to cause arteries to have spasms and can lead to the formation of clots that block circulation, thus causing heart attacks.

Dr. Chyatte said it hasn't been proven that cocaine can cause cerebral hemorrhages, but it is known that the drug can cause a rapid increase in blood pressure which would put a sudden strain on blood vessels.

A cerebral hemorrhage occurs when small vessels in the brain rupture, causing intracranial bleeding. Se-

vere bleeding can lead quickly to death. Smaller ruptures can cause the death of brain cells and a loss of function, just as in other types of stroke.

Some 50,000 to 60,000 Americans annually suffer cerebral hemorrhages and about 40 per cent of this number die. Usually, the disorder occurs among people 60 to 70 years old. A contributing factor is thought to be high blood pressure.

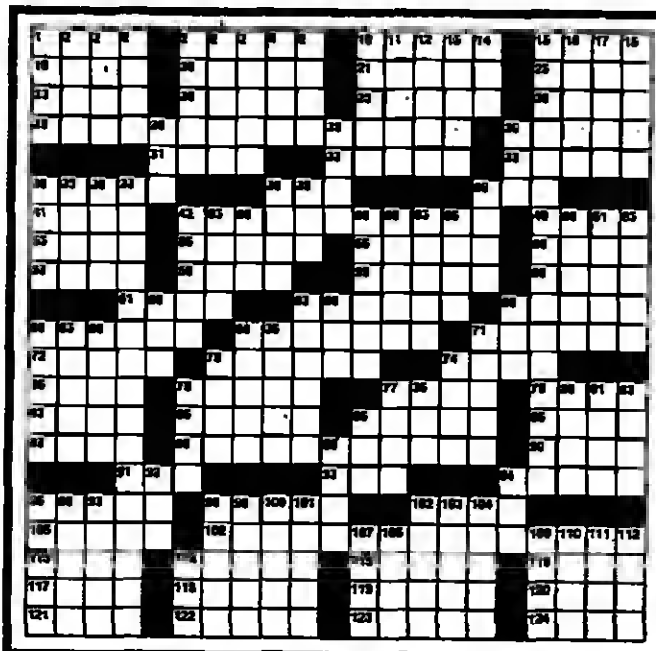
Dr. Chyatte made the study while at Yale University School of Medicine. He now is an associate professor of neurosurgery at Northwestern University School of Medicine in Chicago. A larger study on the relationship of cocaine to stroke is planned in the Chicago area, he said.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

MADE TO MEASURE
By Norma Steinberg

ACROSS
1 LAPD, e.g.
2 Important
3 100
4 Body regulator
5 Often harrowed
6 Took the bait
7 Ready for business
8 Fred Astaire's sister
9 Less refined
10 Inhabits
11 Emission
12 Street sign
13 Plaster material
14 Strain and
15 Stride
16 Rocky outcropping
17 Good first impression
18 Use a gliderman

DOWN
1 Barber's item
2 Early Ron Howard part
3 Siles
4 Tanager tarsus
5 Bravery
6 Dunderhead
7 Shesha shatters
8 Hebrew letter
9 Talk show host
10 Entrees
11 Fernando or Lorenzo
12 Cognizant
13 Social zippers
14 AIA members
15 Certain party
16 RFD word
17 Specialty
18 Vegas transaction
19 Feb
20 At any



Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Some impatient patients curved noses for neglect, but budget cuts got the most blame from hospital staffs.
2. The mentally unbalanced lady thought a catayst was a good cowboy.
3. In flying northeast anywhere, there are several of when they should get off the plane.
4. Grandchildren are parenthood's biggest unpredictable bonus.

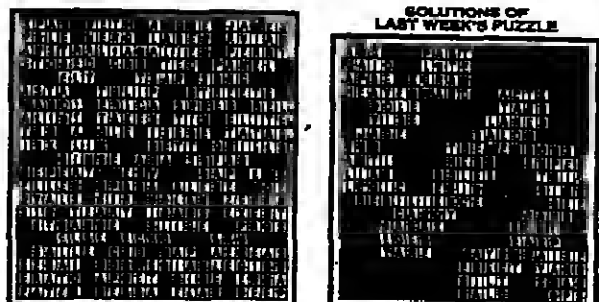
CRYPTOGRAMS

1. JQEDDSN WASBQV QANX NSEDFJ CKEP
HSEAF ITCLQSAJ WTA VTLAJ KQ
NTHQTH IATJJEK.
—By Earl Ireland

2. RCUS EKDUS GETS ACCLICHT LICK BMLCU
ANURSPED MBLA FM AFLNLPFE
BFFGOS, AFFLIC.
—By Ed Radcliffe

3. BSIBJQ EPRLO HPSRXPL JP RLXRXJZ
NUHIZU QXOOL XL NPSOU AQFJP FK
AXXNI NLXRXJZ.
—By Rita Salvato

4. RVEAUN POKET TYPILUXE TZAVCU
STIE CIIX VB PFVG GVCFTN—UXYZ IOU
IS LIBUYEU.
—By Armitage Shanks



Study points to global sperm count reduction

By Randi Hutter Epstein
The Associated Press

LONDON — Average sperm count in healthy men has dropped by half in the past 50 years, according to a global review of 61 studies including 14,947 men.

Experts say the study directed by Dr. Niels E. Skakkebaek of the University of Copenhagen lends credence to speculation that environmental pollutants may damage production of sperm cells.

"I think there is cause for concern," said Dr. Richard Sharpe, a respected reproductive biologist at the University of Edinburgh. "If there is something in our environment having an effect that is drastic enough to decrease sperm count by 50 per cent, we should know what

this factor is."

Dr. Sherman Silber, an infertility specialist at St. Luke's Hospital in St. Louis, cautioned against jumping to conclusions. He said he has not found a decline in average sperm count among patients at his clinic in the past 20 years.

"I'm not close-minded that there can be environmental changes causing all sorts of problems; but on the other hand you can't panic" over research that combines data from several studies, he said.

Conflicting results have emerged from previous studies. Dr. Skakkebaek, whose findings are published in the Sept. 12 issue of the British Medical Journal, said his review was the first to collect worldwide statistics and limit the analysis to healthy men.

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLES

1) DIVIDING £480:
Anson, £260; Benson £140; Carson £80. At the finish each had £160.

2) FIND THE GIRLS:
The girls' names are:
ELEANOR, BARBARA, ADELINE, AND REBECCA.

ROPE CLIMBING
Tilbury beats Nogo by 25 ft. (The ropes were 42 feet in length).

FAST QUIZ:

- Chinese.
- Kaaba. Prophet Mohammad was born in Mecca, in Saudi Arabia. The Great Mosque is the centre of worship for Muslims. A small stone building known as the Kaaba is in the centre of an open area within the mosque. On the south wall rests the Black Stone when they pray. The Black Stone, according to the Muslim tradition, was given to Abraham by the angel Gabriel.
- In a farmhouse (at Appomattox Court House, Virginia).
- Lord Chancellor.
- Moscow.
- Waterloo. Battle of Waterloo June 17-19, 1815. Act of Congress of Vienna June 9, 1815.
- This is the room where monks have their meals. The word is used generally for refectory tables, refectory room at college, etc., but always with the same utility meaning.
- The three countries are: — Belgium.
— The Netherlands.
— Luxembourg.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	NEW YORK CLOSE 15/9/92	TOKYO CLOSE 16/9/92
Sterling Pound	1.8616	1.8648
Deutsche Mark	1.4919	1.4905
Swiss Franc	1.3200	1.3168
French Franc	5.0660	5.0703**
Japanese Yen	124.37	124.30
European Currency Unit	1.3465	1.3451**

USD Per SDJ
European Floating in SDJ and CSDT

European Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.12	5.06	5.12	5.25
Sterling Pound	10.87	10.87	10.87	11.00
Deutsche Mark	9.31	9.25	9.25	9.12
Swiss Franc	7.06	7.06	7.06	7.00
French Franc	9.87	9.87	9.87	9.87
Japanese Yen	4.28	4.27	3.68	3.68
European Currency Unit	11.51	11.19	11.13	10.75

Previous Metals

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	345.90	6.50	Silver	3.83	0.060

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	1.675	0.677
Sterling Pound	1.2613	1.2676
Deutsche Mark	0.4553	0.4553
Swiss Franc	0.5126	0.5152
French Franc	0.1336	0.1343
Japanese Yen	0.5428	0.5455
Dutch Guilder	0.4026	0.4044
Swedish Krona	0.1235	0.1239
Italian Lira	0.0561	0.0564
Belgian Franc	0.02212	0.02223

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7600	1.7790
Lebanese Lira	0.02760	0.0300
Saudi Riyal	0.1797	0.1810
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2250	2.3050
Qatari Riyal	0.1440	0.1460
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2100
Omani Riyal	1.7220	1.7350
UAE Dirham	0.1829	0.1840
Greek Drachma	0.3815	1.3075
Cypriot Pound	0.5450	1.5750

CAR Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	14/9/92	Close	15/9/92	Close
All-Share	1145.97		1166.01	
Banking Sector	107.99		107.83	
Insurance Sector	150.64		151.57	
Industry Sector	198.79		198.87	
Services Sector	203.26		204.63	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One Sterling	1.8585/95	U.S. dollars	1.2168/73
One U.S. dollar	1.4880/90	Canadian dollar	1.6750/70
	1.3070/85	Deutsche marks	30.50/59
	1205/1210	Dutch guilders	5.0700/800
	124.26/30	Swiss francs	1205/1210
	5.4900/5100	Belgian francs	124.26/30
	5.9400/600	French francs	5.4900/5100
	5.7550/750	Italian lire	5.9400/600
One ounce of gold	\$346.50/347.00	Japanese yen	5.7550/750
		Swedish crowns	
		Norwegian crowns	
		Danish crowns	

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

STOCKS AND BONDS

COMPANY'S NAME

COMPANY'S NAME	LAST PRICE	CHANGES	OPENING	CLOSING
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	9,434	1,000	3,000	1,070
JORDAN COMMERCIAL BANK	63,912	2,750	2,770	2,310
THE JORDANIAN BANK	8,750	2,250	2,230	2,750
JORDAN BANK FOR SAVINGS & INVESTMENT	1,230	2,660	2,400	2,400
JORDAN BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	15,179	2,300	2,300	2,310
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	122,343	3,400	2,400	2,380
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	964	2,500	2,600	2,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	62,498	1,260	1,260	1,250
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	240,552	1,940	1,900	1,900
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	22,408	2,280	2,280	2,280
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	2,242	2,120	2,170	2,130
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	22,424	4,990	4,440	4,440
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	1,743	1,100	17,400	17,450
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	634	14,700	14,600	14,600
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	29,100	115,000	115,000	115,000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	6,780	2,700	2,700	2,700
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	60,790	2,840	2,840	2,840
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	8,797	1,620	1,620	1,700
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	988	1,480	1,480	1,480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	481	1,840	1,840	1,840
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	628	1,400	1,270	1,270
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	212,099	3,460	3,390	2,710
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	1,944	1,190	1,200	1,220
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	1,340	0,640	0,670	0,670
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	281,481	1,680	1,680	1,680
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	5,185	0,350	0,350	0,350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	70,211	1,040	1,040	1,040
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	270,518	1,150	1,150	1,150
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	125,078	0,810	0,800	0,810
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	1,697	1,130	1,130	1,130
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	11,183	1,480	1,470	1,480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	2,807	2,530	2,530	2,530
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	50,818	0,350	0,350	0,350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	49,226	0,900	0,900	0,900
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	6,140	2,900	2,900	2,900
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	214,108	0,840	0,840	0,840
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	444,521	7,880	7,950	6,770
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	42,788	2,990	2,610	2,970
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	81,173	0,500	0,700	0,750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	14,226	0,620	0,640	0,700
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	36,225	0,770	0,760	0,760
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	6,140	2,900	2,900	2,900
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	12,446	2,840	2,840	2,840
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	32,263	2,210	2,210	2,220
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	188,700	0,680	0,680	0,790
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	6,773	4,400	4,400	4,580
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	46,282	12,500	12,500	12,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	22,084	1,970	1,970	1,940
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	3,225	1,140	1,130	1,130
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	20,621	2,020	2,020	2,020
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	125,227	6,250	6,250	6,270
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	499,287	2,730	2,740	2,990
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	22,388	1,294	1,290	1,290
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	9,348	1,400	1,400	1,400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	8,448	0,480	0,470	0,460
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	59,252	4,440	4,440	4,460
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/NEW	743,189	8,430	8,430	8,210
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT/OLD	10,778	0,300	0,300	0,300

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Jordan's cigarette company admits producing some low quality products

Following is the first of a two-part article which examines Jordan's tobacco industry in general and reasons behind the Jordanians' preferring to smoke foreign cigarettes in particular.

By Samir Shaif
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Maha, Lulu, Samar, Sport, Victory and Al Sayyed were familiar names some 35 years ago or more before Goldstar, Philadelphia, Nassim, Reem, Kamal and Top Twenty outshined them about a year ago when Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette Co. Ltd. (JTCC) launched Amman and Trust to build up confidence among Jordanian smokers.

It is not easy to work out how Jordanians assess their national tobacco industry or to what extent they are satisfied with its quality. However, it is almost a unanimous opinion of all those asked that Jordanian cigarettes have considerably declined in quality over the years.

"I remember the good old days when the late Mazhar Al Nabulsi smoked Jordanian 'Friends' cigarettes," an old man said while preparing coffee to civil servants at a government department.

"When Friends disappeared, he tried other brands, but finally settled on Marlboro," his widow told the Jordan Times later.

Mazhar Al Nabulsi was secretary-general of the former Ministry of Construction and Development.

An airline employee recalled his father taking Jordanian cigarettes as valuable presents to relatives in Lebanon many years ago.

Nowadays, both agree, and so do others, Jordanian cigarettes are very poor in quality.

What attests to this fact is the following:

1) JTCC managing director Ali Al Saad complained in July (Jordan Times, July 9-10, 1992) that cigarette sales have dropped by 15 per cent, largely because of competition from legal and illegal foreign-made cigarettes.

2) JTCC annual report for 1991 admits that the quality of the cigarettes has dropped but only because the government refused to increase the percentage the company takes from the fixed sale prices of cigarettes (except for Amman and Trust) to the consumer.

JTCC claims that the negative economic situation in 1988 has raised production costs and that the company was forced to lower the quality of its products to avoid losses.

3) JTCC also admits in its annual report that cigarette-smuggling has reached an unprecedented level due to the unstable situation engulfing the region in the aftermath of the Gulf war.

4) Hassan Awad, president of the Union of Workers in Food Industries, told the Jordan Times in July that the tobacco company had laid off 26 workers because of local market being flooded with foreign cigarettes. He said that the company had

also cancelled overtime work for 1,000 employees and stopped a number of machines and production lines.

5) Local JTCC sales failed to register any noticeable increase last year. The company had predicted a 10 per cent rise to meet higher demand from Gulf returnees, but sales barely moved from 2,972 million cigarettes in 1990 to 2,973.5 million cigarettes in 1991.

JTCC local sales had continually slumped since 1989 when a total of 2,706.6 million cigarettes were sold, compared to a record 3,256.3 million cigarettes sold in 1988. The difference was due to smokers switching to foreign cigarettes which the government began importing in 1989.

According to the annual report for 1991, Jordanian exports were as high as 1,695 million cigarettes in 1982, but the volume hit a low of only 85.6 million in 1989 before recovering to 719 million cigarettes in 1991, mainly because of substantial exports to Iraq.

An informed businessman told the Jordan Times that JTCC had limited its cigarette exports only to neighbouring Arab countries and has shown no real effort to tap new markets in Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union, for example.

"There might have been a shipment that was exported to Romania and, to the best of my knowledge, the Romanians were not satisfied enough to request other shipments," the businessman said.

Despite the grievances mentioned by the consumers and the company, JTCC annual report shows the following financial results for 1991 and the previous years:

1) Overall sales during 1991 totalled JD 65.8 million, compared to JD 61 million in sales during 1990. In 1990 a total of 3,179.2 cigarettes were sold, compared to 3,692.2 cigarettes sold in 1991.

2) Fees and taxes paid last year to the treasury amounted to JD 48.8 million, an 80 per cent volume of local sales.

At the end of 1989, the year of lowest sales (local and export) since 1982, the total value earned by JTCC was JD 50.9 million, of which the government received JD 41 million in fees and taxes or 76 per cent of the local sales volume.

3) Dividends to shareholders in 1991 totalled JD 600,000, or 40 per cent of the paid-up capital. Distributed at JD 0.200 per share, the company noted that 1991 was an exceptional year due to the high volume of exports and that similar achievements might not recur.

Dividends in 1990 totalled JD 225,000 only, or 15 per cent of the paid-up capital.

4) The approximately 511 million cigarettes in extra exports in 1991 resulted in a net profit of JD 1.27 million for the company. JTCC made a JD 316,633 net profit in 1990 having exported only 207.2 million cigarettes in that year. Local sales, as previously mentioned, were almost unchanged in both years.

5) Equipment and machines have a 1991 net value of JD 137,965 as accumulated depreciation of seven per cent each year has exceeded JD 4 million.

Currency crisis in Europe widens

LONDON (AP) — Britain's pound was changing hands at 2.7480 marks, well below the level of 2.7780 marks that it had reached in late August, but the pound is supposed to be the pound's minimum level in the ERM. The pound plunged to \$1.8083, from \$1.8715 late Tuesday.

"It's very unclear as to what the government can now do," said Stephen King, deputy chief economist at James Capel and Co. in London.

Prime Minister John Major has insisted his government will not devalue the pound, and Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont indicated that he was prepared to push interest rates higher if necessary.

The U.S. dollar's sharp gains reflected a belief among traders that the greenback remained a haven of stability despite persistent troubles in the U.S. economy.

Britain's higher interest rates stirred fears of a worsening recession, with more job losses, business failures and home repossessions that could spread elsewhere.

The hectic trading was made even more urgent by Sunday's crucial French vote on the Maastricht treaty for European political and monetary unity, and the currency crisis seemed to worsen by the hour across Europe.

Sweden raised short-term interest rate to an astounding 500 per cent, a day after pushing them from 20 per cent to 75 per cent in an effort to stop investors from dumping the krona.

Holland and Belgium lowered interest rates in a bid to take pressure off other currencies. But Italy and Spain joined Britain in watching their currencies sink to their floors of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), which sets the maximum fluctuation among major European currencies.

Late in the European afternoon, the pound was changing hands at 2.7480 marks, well below the level of 2.7780 marks that it had reached in late August, but the pound is supposed to be the pound's minimum level in the ERM. The pound plunged to \$1.8083, from \$1.8715 late Tuesday.

cent and at the same time Italy devalued the lira by seven per cent. Traders concluded that Germany hadn't done enough, and the mark began rising again.

The European Community (EC) in Brussels indicated Wednesday that it had ruled out an immediate realignment of the ERM, but some traders wondered whether the present ERM could survive through Sunday.

"It may be that the ERM will have to be radically overhauled or restructured — I think a realignment of the ERM is fairly imminent," said George Magnus, chief international economist of the financial house of S.G. Warburg in London.

Arab Bank setting up subsidiary in Germany

AMMAN — Arab Bank Chairman Abdul Majeed Shoman said Wednesday that the Amman-based bank is establishing a fully licensed wholly-owned subsidiary in Frankfurt with a capital of DM 50 million.

This subsidiary, he said, would continue to serve Arab Bank clients in Germany and all over the world since the shareholders of UBAE (Arab German Bank) have agreed to liquidate it amicably.

Mr. Shoman said the shareholders, namely, Arab Bank, Commerzbank and UBIC would guarantee UBAE assets to correspondents and customers.



Abdul Majeed Shoman

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Muslims accuse Serb fighters of new offensives in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Muslims accused Serb forces Wednesday of mounting new ethnic cleansing operations and air and ground attacks in the former Yugoslav Republic.

Sarajevo Radio said Muslim suburbs of the capital were hit by sporadic mortar fire during the night.

The scale of violence has been rising steadily ahead of fresh peace negotiations between Bosnia's warring Muslim, Croat and Serb communities due to start in Geneva Friday.

Explosions have damaged Sarajevo's water system, halting supplies to hospitals. Food stocks held by United Nations peacekeepers for the trapped population of 380,000 have dwindled to enough for only three days.

The radio reported seven Serb air attacks in the last 24 hours on the Muslim-held town of Jajce in western Bosnia but gave no indication of casualties or damage.

The U.N. earlier said Serb aircraft struck at Bijac in the northwest Monday.

Muslim reports said Muslims

were being driven from their homes around Mount Romanija near Sarajevo in fresh ethnic cleansing by Serbs.

The town of Gradacac in north east Bosnia, which is under partial Serb siege, was hit by 100 mortar shells last night, the reports added. Conditions in the town were reported to be deteriorating with outbreaks of illness including hepatitis.

Marrack Goulding, head of U.N. peacekeeping operations, said Tuesday there was an urgent need for a no-fly zone over Bosnia to prevent air raids.

"The Bosnian Serbs are undoubtedly using their aircraft... to attack mainly Muslim targets," he told British television "this is a gross violation of the many cease-fires which they have signed."

But U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney told Reuters there were differing points of view over the proposal, which came as U.N. mediators tried to ensure that peace talks would begin in Geneva as planned.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, who threatened last weekend to boycott the talks if a

no-fly zone was unilaterally imposed, issued a statement proposing safe corridors for relief flights, but opposed further restrictions.

He did not spell out his response if his offer was rejected, but a threat to the Geneva talks was implicit.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic said at the weekend his side would not go to Geneva but changed his mind after an angry reaction from U.N. mediator Cyrus Vance.

At the United Nations, the European Community and the 47-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference of mounted a determined challenge to rump Yugoslavia, the Bosnian Serbs' main backer, saying it had no right to the former Yugoslav Federation's seat.

Yugoslavia is now formed only by Serbia and Montenegro, following declarations of independence over the past 15 months by the former Yugoslav Republics of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia.

More than 10,000 people have

been killed in fighting in Bosnia alone, mainly between majority Muslims and Croats and minority Serbs, since a vote for independence last March.

Russia, which had previously hinted that it might use its Security Council veto against a move to suspend Yugoslavia, appeared to be wavering.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky told a news briefing in Moscow: "We think it would be counter-productive to talk of the isolation of Yugoslavia from international organisations."

But he conceded that "perhaps a formula will be found... that would suit everyone", such as a new application for membership from Yugoslavia.

But Western nations and Muslim states which back them in the General Assembly apparently believe Yugoslavia should be suspended as punishment for its role in the war. They might not view any future application favourably until it ends.

The United Nations has branded Serb as the main aggressor.



A Sarajevo couple runs on an empty street in the city industrial area of the Bosnian capital. The black smoke billows from a fire in a rubber factory which broke out after a mortar attack.

Solarz loses in New York primaries

NEW YORK (AP) — State Attorney General Robert Abrams narrowly led Geraldine Ferraro for New York's Democratic Senate nomination Tuesday in a late, long count that was too close to call. Veterans House members Stephen Solarz and Chester Atkins fell, the latest casualties in a tumultuous primary season.

State Sen. Patty Murray won Washington's Democratic Senate race and became the record 11th woman to qualify for the November ballot as a Senate candidate.

On a night that blended the poignant with the merely political, the late Rep. Ted Weiss won a Democratic nomination in New York one day after his death from heart disease.

Redemption figured in the balloting as well, as former Washington, D.C., Mayor Marion Barry won the Democratic nomination to a city council seat despite a drug conviction and subsequent prison term. Former Rep. Mario Biaggi met a different fate in New York as he bid for a comeback following a jail term for extortion. He lost to two-term Rep. Eliot Engel in a Democratic primary.

Seven states and the District of Columbia held elections on the last busy night of the primary year, and the marquee event was New York's Democratic race to pick an opponent for two-term Republican Sen. Alfonse D'Amato.

With the votes counted in 99 per cent of the precincts, Mr. Abrams had 37 per cent of the vote, to 36 per cent for Ms. Ferraro — a difference of 10,968 votes out of more than 809,000 cast. Black activist Al Sharpton and city official Liz Holtzman trailed.

Mr. Abrams, who campaigned as a liberal, claimed victory. "We did it. We have an insurmountable lead and we have won," he told supporters.

But Ms. Ferraro, the 1984 Democratic vice presidential candidate, refused to concede. "It's a little bit tense," she said. "It's been a roller coaster, but we're all enjoying the see-saw."

County Election Boards are required to conduct an official canvass, including an unknown number of absentee ballots, within nine days.

Mr. Abrams and Ms. Holtzman challenged Ms. Ferraro on alleged ties to organized crime by her husband, John Zaccaro, and sought to capitalise on the lease the family real estate company gave to a pornographer.

Ms. Ferraro denied any links to organized crime, and cited repeated efforts to convict the pornographer.

Seven-term Democratic Rep. Mike Synar fought off anti-incumbent fever to win his Oklahoma runoff. And Rhode Island Gov. Bruce Sundlun won a close re-election race following a rocky first term spent grappling with a state banking crisis.

Mitterrand's surgery shows prostate cancer

PARIS (AP) — President Francois Mitterrand is suffering from prostate cancer but his condition can be treated by medication and he will resume his duties this week, a doctor who operated on him said Wednesday.

The 75-year-old president will vote in France's crucial referendum Sunday on the European union treaty, his doctors said in a communiqué. Mr. Mitterrand, in power since 1981, has staked his prestige on approval of the treaty.

A biopsy on tissue removed from Mr. Mitterrand's prostate gland Friday showed the presence of malignant lesions, his doctors said.

Prostate cancer is among the least serious forms of cancer

when detected early.

"The president of the republic has recovered normally, after the operation he had five days ago," Dr. Adolphe Steg, who performed the operation, and Mr. Mitterrand's personal physician, Claude Gabriel, said in the statement.

The president's ailment "consists of classic cancerous lesions, which thousands of Frenchmen have," Dr. Gubler told reporters. "The president will receive medical treatment. It is a treatment that will allow him to maintain completely his activities."

Mr. Mitterrand will receive hormonal medication as opposed to radiation or chemical therapy, Dr. Gubler added.

Japan warns Russia not to develop disputed islands

TOKYO (R) — Japan, angered by Russian plans to develop a cluster of Japanese-claimed islands, has lodged a formal protest with Moscow, government officials said Wednesday.

"There's a problem if (Russia) begins signing contracts on territory claimed by Japan," chief government spokesman Koichi Kato told a news conference. "The Russian government should take appropriate measures to rectify the situation," he said after Tokyo protested formally to Moscow through diplomatic channels.

Relations worsened after President Boris Yeltsin suddenly cancelled a visit to Tokyo last week, just four days before he was due to arrive, due to differences over a decades-long territorial dispute.

Japan refuses to sign a World War II peace treaty or extend large-scale aid to Russia until it gives up four islands seized by the Red Army at the end of the war in 1945.

Shortly after Mr. Yeltsin's cancellation, Japan was angered by reports that Russia's Sakhalin regional government, which administers the disputed islands, had leased land on one of them, Shikotan, to a Hong Kong firm for resort development.

The Foreign Ministry said Wednesday it had confirmed reports that local authorities on Shikotan had awarded the Hong Kong firm of Carlson And Kaplan a 50-year lease on 278 hectares (687 acres) of land for resort development.

Shikotan is one of the four Northern Islands claimed by Japan and, in particular, was designated (for reversion to Japanese rule) in the 1956 Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration, a statement said, outlining the points raised with Russia.

"Japan cannot approve the signing of such a contract," the Foreign Ministry also pointed out that the development area was near a graveyard for Japanese families who lived on the island until the end of World War II in 1945.

It was then that Soviet troops swept through the Kurile chain, forcing Japanese to flee to the nearby main northern island of Hokkaido.

News reports in Tokyo said that Carlson And Kaplan was a paper firm linked to a Japanese businessman who had agreed to lease the land on Shikotan for \$125 million.

Sergei Grinko, a senior Sakhalin government official, confirmed the deal was made with a Japanese businessman but estimated its value at 200 million roubles.

He said also the contract had been under negotiation for some time and was not intended to embarrass Japan.

"We had been negotiating this deal for half a year and the timing of its conclusion was just a coincidence," said Mr. Grinko.

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Hitler's corpse shown on CIS TV

MOSCOW (R) — A corpse said to be that of Adolf Hitler, intact and lying in the yard of the Berlin Chancellery, was shown in an archive film broadcast by Commonwealth Television.

If authentic, the film must throw doubt on the widespread reports following World War II that Hitler's body was burned after he either shot or poisoned himself.

Broadcast late Tuesday, it showed the body, in uniform and with the distinctive moustache clearly visible, laid out on the ground on an officer's overcoat.

The corpse, shown for only a few seconds, was surrounded by Soviet soldiers and at least one German, apparently a prisoner of war.

The television did not say where the film had come from but the footage appeared to be from KGB secret police archives, now being declassified after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The commentator said: "Here was perhaps the first and most unexpected find. It was in the courtyard of the Reichskanzlei (Chancellery) — the corpse of Hitler."

"Many mysteries surround this menacing figure and some of them have not yet been resolved."

Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun were believed to have committed suicide, their bodies burnt by German officers in accordance with their wishes.

A Russian historian said in a newspaper interview in July that the bodies of Hitler and Braun, who committed suicide on April 30, 1945, were found by Russian military intelligence on May 4.

They were not burnt, said historian Lev Bezymensky.

Soviet dictator Josef Stalin ordered the bodies to be buried secretly, but then the remnants were shifted to different places at least six times, last time near Magdeburg in then east Germany, he said.

Soviet authorities did the same to the bodies of Nazi ideology chief Josef Goebbels and his family.

In 1946 Stalin ordered the bodies of Hitler and Braun to be exhumed one more time and subjected to forensic studies to verify their identities.

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WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

China criticises U.S. Senate vote

PEKING (R) — China Wednesday strongly criticised the U.S. Senate vote to attach conditions to its most favoured nation (MFN) trade status and warned Washington that pressuring Peking would backfire. "It is absolutely unacceptable to the Chinese side to attach any conditions in extending MFN treatment to China," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said in response to a reporter's question. "Any actions aimed at harming China will certainly harm one's own interest in the end," the spokesman said. The Senate Monday approved the placing of conditions on renewal of China's favourable trade status next year. The move sets up a new veto fight with President George Bush on the sensitive issue of U.S.-Chinese relations.

Thai army chiefs back new premier

BANGKOK (R) — Thailand's military chiefs, stepping back from a 60-year tradition of meddling in politics, have given their blessing to the man chosen by pro-democracy parties as prime minister, the Nation newspaper reported Wednesday. Chuan Leekpai, whose Democrats won more seats than other parties in Sunday's general election, said Tuesday the leaders of four allied parties had agreed he should become prime minister. The polls were held four months after a bloody army crackdown on protesters who demanded an end to military influence in politics and the removal of unelected General Suchinda Kraprayoon as prime minister. A source close to the armed forces leadership, reported in the Nation, quoted new army commander General Wirat Wongwanich as saying: "Although Chuan is a small guy he is a capable man. The way he talked showed he is a reasonable man." Deputy Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Yuthana Khamdee was quoted as saying: "He is a good person and he has been chosen by the people."

Top Kashmiri militants killed

SRINAGAR (R) — Four top Kashmiri militants were killed by Indian security forces, sparking street battles in Srinagar that injured at least 15 people, police and hospital sources said. Jaunm and Kashmir state Director General of Police B.S. Bedi said the four were killed in an "encounter" with Indian paramilitary forces before dawn during a search operation in Srinagar, summer capital of the state. The pro-Pakistan Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, the main Kashmiri groups fighting to break away from India, said in a statement that the four were killed in custody to avenge the deaths. Militants attacked security forces outside the city hours after the incident, injuring two paramilitary policemen and four bystanders, initial police reports said. "Nine people were injured in a stampede when militants opened a busy market area, hospital sources said. Witnesses said the attacks spread terror throughout Srinagar, hotbed of a revolt that has killed some 8,000 people in India's only Muslim-majority state since 1990.

9 die, 11 hurt in Dutch hostel blaze

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A fire tore through a downtown hostel Wednesday, killing at least nine people and injuring 11, police said. The fire was reported at 4.45 a.m. (0245 GMT) at the De Vogel Pension, and police said there were some 30-35 people in the building at the time of the blaze, police spokeswoman Marieke Schutte said. Rescue crews and firefighters recovered the bodies of nine of the victims and 11 people were hospitalised with injuries, Mr. Schutte said.

Collier linked to 'criminal acts'

BRASILIA (R) — Brazil's attorney-general said he had indications linking President Fernando Collor De Mello to "criminal acts" in his government, dealing another blow to Mr. Collor's efforts to avert impeachment. Attorney-General Aristides Junqueira, a Collor appointee, said in a legal writ to the Supreme Court that Mr. Collor was implicated in the charges of widespread corruption in his government. Copies of the writ, based on investigations by Brazil's Congress and police into charges of graft, were distributed to news organisations. "The testimonies and statements obtained in this investigation... reveal the occurrence of criminal acts, whose vehement indications point to his excellency, the president," said Mr. Junqueira's document.

2 Koreas move closer to detente

SEOUL (R) — North and South Korea moved closer to easing cold war tensions Wednesday in talks which Southern officials said were close to clinching landmark agreements on detente.

Delegates from the North and South met in the North Korean capital Pyongyang to work out details of three agreements which would increase economic cooperation and reduce political and military confrontation.

If these accords are adopted, three separate commissions would start putting into motion programmes for reconciliation and cooperation — additional steps on the rocky road to eventual reunification of the peninsula divided since 1945.

"Chances of reaching a breakthrough are bright," said Lee Dong-Bok, spokesman for South Korean Prime Minister Chung Won-Shik, after committee talks which started Tuesday evening and extended into the early hours of Wednesday.

The southern optimism contrasted with gloomy predictions of failure which Mr. Chung's officials made before arriving Tuesday in Pyongyang.

Mr. Chung is holding an eighth round of meetings with his Northern counterpart, Yon Hyong-Muk.

The spokesman said the two sides would continue working-level contacts until Thursday to settle remaining differences.

The two Koreas, still technically at war since the 1950-53 conflict, signed a non-aggression pact last December. This provided a framework for settling details of the agreements now under discussion in Pyongyang.

The talks have regularly become mired in mutual accusations of foot-dragging, bad faith and obstruction. Only the economic accord looked ready for adoption before the start of the current discussions.

Analysis says news of a breakthrough may not be as momentous as it might look. They say that if political and military agreements are also reached in Pyongyang, it would probably mean that vital sticking points had simply been cauterised, for discussion later.

Mr. Chung held an open session with Mr. Yon Wednesday, urging the North to show sincerity in ending a row over one of the key points blocking detente, the South's insistence on gaining access to Northern nuclear facilities.

COLUMN 100001

Balloonists lift off on perilous race across Atlantic

BANGOR, Maine (AP) — Five high-tech helium balloons lifted off before daybreak Wednesday on a perilous, unprecedented race across the Atlantic that will end when one of them crosses any paved road in Europe. Hundreds of spectators lined the runway at Bass Park Racetrack as the five international teams embarked on the first trans-Atlantic balloon race. The 3,000-mile (5,000-kilometre) trip is expected to take three to five days. "We feel very confident, and we're anxious to go," Troy Bradley, one of the two American flyers, said minutes before liftoff from this central Maine city. The two-man teams from the United States, Britain, Germany, Belgium and Holland are vying for a 2-foot (2/3 metre) bronze trophy.

Philippine dancers want age limit change

MANILA (R) — Some 300 Filipino entertainers staged a noisy protest at a labour office to try to persuade the government to lift a ban on young dancers going to Japan. They held up placards and shouted: "Remove the age limit" in a two-hour rally outside the offices of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, which issues clearances to workers who go abroad. The agency is reviewing a ban on sending Filipino women younger than 23 to Japan. The ban was imposed last year after widespread reports that "The government can't give us jobs, now they have deprived us of a right to make a living," a statement by the protesters said.

Theft of rare plants likened to arts haul

LONDON (R) — Thieves who stole a batch of rare, six-foot (1.8 metre) New Zealand plants from a botanic garden will have to keep them hidden, the curator said. The entire collection of 27 endangered pseudopanax plants was stolen from the gardens on the Isle of Wight in southern England. Police said a large vehicle would have been needed to remove them. "These were so striking — with unusual leaf shapes — that they are a bit like a fine art theft. They will have to go into hiding, at least the ones that survive," said garden curator Simon Goodenough. The New Zealand government gave Goodenough permission to remove the plants for breeding and conservation six years ago.

Richard Dreyfuss files for divorce

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Richard Dreyfuss, Oscar-winning star of The Goodbye Girl, filed for divorce to end his nine-year marriage to Jeramie Rain. Dreyfuss, court documents show, filed for divorce from his wife on Feb. 28 and filed his divorce petition in Los Angeles County Superior Court, citing irreconcilable differences. A call to the actor's lawyer, Dennis Wasserman, was not immediately returned. But a spokesman for the actor, Richard Grant, said, "the agreement to part was mutual and amicable." Dreyfuss, 44, is seeking joint custody of the couple's three children, the documents show.

Abortion of female fetuses raising ratio of boy babies

TAIPEI (AP) — Boys have been outnumbering girls 110 to 100 among Taiwan's newborn because of women having abortions if tests show that their babies will be female, an official said. Last year, 169,000 boys and 153,000 girls were born in Taiwan, maintaining the 110-100 ratio for the third year, said Lin Hsuei-Sheng, a section chief at the Taiwan Provincial Family Planning Institute. The ratio had been 106 boys to 100 girls in the 1970s and early 1980s. Taiwanese usually prefer boys, which can inherit and carry on the family name. Some mothers would give birth to seven or eight children just to have a boy. But officials said mothers now can learn their baby's sex before birth using a medical test called amniocentesis. "Many parents want at least one boy in the much desired two-child family," said Mr. Lin. "The mother seeks abortion when she learns she is going to have a second girl."

Heart patient to sell house to pay for operation

BELFAST (R) — A Northern Ireland man told he will have to wait three years for urgent heart bypass surgery, under Britain's National Health Service plans to sell his house so he can have the operation done privately.

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